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CROWELL'S HANDY INFORMATION SERIES

HOW WORDS GROW

A BRIEF STUDY OF LITERARY STYLE,
SLANG, AND PROVINCIALISMS

BY

LEON MEAD

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"When the mint of the United States coins dollars it takes old coins, or bars, or metal fresh from the mine, gives the right stamp, which is nothing but a guarantee of weight and fineness, and sends the coin out to serve the people. The mint does not create. Man is not a creator. When men have need of a new word, to name a new commodity, an act, or principle, they draw upon the resources of their ancient speech, recast or restamp some old word, give it a new birth, and send it forth upon its mission.

"Such new words, or fresh coinages, have a birthday, a birthplace, and a birthright ; like other children of men, they grow up weak or strong, they migrate, sometimes over wide areas ; occasionally they marry and have offspring ; in the struggle of life they wear off, like coins ; and sooner or later they are melted down or die. It is this biographical or human element in words and phrases which constitutes their unfailing interest, and this interest appeals alike to plain people and the greatest students. The reason is obvious. Words are the mirror of the people that coin them, and they reflect the mind of the people rather better perhaps than architecture and other visible monuments, which perish or vanish."—
From an Address by Mr. C. W. Ernst before the
Bostonian Society, 1896.



PREFACE.

AWARE that many persons, glancing at the cover, but not wasting their precious time in reading this book, may misjudge it from its title as having a meretricious design, the author hastens to assure all possible readers that no new words have been made expressly for it. The title, too, is a somewhat awkward compound, but there seems to be no other term so available for my present purpose.

While it is realized that the fertile soil of the subject has scarcely more than been scratched, there is some consolation in the fact that all the data could not be compressed within the limits of these pages. Since the first draft of this book was finished a work has appeared, bearing the title of *Semantics: Studies in the Science of Meaning*, from the learned pen of Michel Bréal, Professor of Comparative Grammar at the Collège de France, an admirable translation of which has been made by Mrs. Henry Cust, and for which

J. P. Postgate, Professor of Comparative Philology at University College, London, has written a notable preface.

This work, whose timely appearance after more than thirty years of research is in itself an event, gives weighty emphasis to the manifold uncertainties of etymology and to the need of more psychologic analysis in the study of words. Professor Bréal doubtless has blazed the way for future explorers in the wilderness of philology. He gets the term *semantics* from the verb *semaino*, to "signify," in opposition to *phonetics*, the science of sounds. Professor Postgate proposes "to call the expression of a single idea or notion a *rheme*, from *rema*, 'a thing said,' and to distinguish the expressions of qualifications and connections of such rhemes by calling them *epirrhemés*, though, as a general term, *rheme* may serve for both. If these terms be approved of, I should propose to call our science *Rhematology*, or the study of rhemes." The terms proposed by these two scholars have about equal chances of a long and useful career, but in any event they are of far less importance than the promising field of inquiry they represent.

A few years ago the present writer began a magazine article on Word-Coinage, with no in-

tention of extending it into a series for publication in book form. But, like a snowball rolled in its own cohesive substance, the work grew until it reached dimensions sufficiently large for a volume. The task was a practical and comparatively simple one. It did not require the linguistic attainments of a Cardinal Mezzofanti. Perseverance and patience were necessary, and correspondence with many authors, some of whom, let it be confidentially whispered, feel their mental oats as much as do horses the earth-grown variety. These worthies do not hesitate to concoct a lingo, conveniently called and sometimes by mere courtesy accepted, by critics as dialect ; but in the matter of new words they deny all responsibility. To coin words is a sin, say some of them ; others call the act a crime, and many who have been culprits in this direction would forget the fact.

Yet the evidences of their beneficence, in a few cases, their enterprise in others, their rashness in still others, abound in their published works, and if I were sure of living three or four hundred years on this footstool of the Almighty, I should like no better job than going through their books and finding their verbal offspring and collocations ; but not flattering myself that I shall be

any phenomenon of longevity, this method is, of course, not feasible.

Fortunately, all authors are not reticent on this subject, and what they have been so kind as to give me is transcribed for the reader in a popular way, and without pretensions to vast learning. At the outset, however, I do not wish to be misunderstood. Personally, I am not in sympathy with the practice of any writer who coins vocabularies merely to exploit his cleverness. Promiscuous verbal¹ inventions which have no *raison d'être* are usually as short-lived as they are detestable. The English language, however, though it now contains many thousands of more words than any other one language on the globe, and a host of words that could well be spared, has by no means reached its limits of normal growth and expansion.

While we have a superabundance of synonyms, we doubtless lack words that express the finest nuances of meaning, such as the French language possesses. These words will creep into our speech in time and become an integral and ornate part of it; in many cases they will be assimilated

¹ Throughout this book "verbal" is used chiefly in its secondary sense, as having to do with written as well as oral words.

from the French, German, and other living languages, and the rest will be substantially our own mintage, though largely based, I hope, on vigorous Anglo-Saxon roots.

Leading up to the subject proper are three chapters which may be deemed essential stepping-stones to a correct understanding of a coined word. And following the chapters dealing with neologisms are certain considerations on slang, provincialisms, etc., which are more closely allied to the general theme than might be casually supposed.

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WORD-COINAGE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

It has been stated that there are three thousand English words not to be found in any dictionary. My own investigations would lead to the inference that there are at least thrice that many. Science constantly requires new words to designate and describe her new discoveries, appliances, and processes; hence it may be said that the vocabularies of all civilized nations are increasing—chiefly in technical words, which the work of the chemist, the electrician, the machinist, etc., renders necessary.

It is said that the late John W. Keeley, of undesirable fame in connection with the myth of perpetual motion, invented some fifteen hundred spurious and pseudo-scientific words and terms, which, in a layman's ears, had a plausible sound. How thankful we should be that these mongrel words are not likely to become "naturalized," as Lord Chesterfield once said of other words.

Americans have enough of a difficult task in memorizing the fairly or wholly legitimate coinages that science, art, fashion, new ideas, names of men, foreign intercourse, national movements, Orientalisms, and slang press upon them.

Some of the most facile as well as boldest writers in the guild of American letters to-day have never coined any words. They do not believe in such expedients. They say that the English language of Shakespeare, Burke, Washington Irving, and Ruskin is good enough for them.

This is the purist's point of view, and purists have a perfect right to their opinions. But suppose all men assumed this inflexible attitude; then, indeed, our language would be at a standstill; it would become a stagnant reservoir.

As a matter of fact, Shakespeare coined many words, and things of this kind probably may be traced to the other three men just cited, as they certainly can be to hundreds of great writers. The derivative "Gothamite" was first employed by Irving in the *Salmagundi* papers; and Burke anglicized at least one French word, to say nothing of some of his slovenly compounds.

There is a fashion in words as in dress and other things. Certain words come curiously into vogue, we know not just how, and are popular for a time until their very triteness¹ drives them into the obsolete list. In the course of two or three generations many of them are revived.

¹ "Words wear themselves out by overuse."—Brander Matthews.

Pope has stated the case better than any one else in the familiar lines :

“In words as in fashions the same rule doth hold,
Alike fantastic if too new or old;
Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.”

This dictum may influence the judicious and conservative jugglers of our mother-tongue. When society takes up an expressive slang word you will find your fashionable author doing likewise, without bothering about its antecedents or pedigree. Doctor Murray, in an address in London before the Philological Society, not long ago, said :

“Words were constantly cropping up in Elizabethan times of which nothing was known, of which nothing cognate could be found in any foreign language. After the discovery of Sanscrit it was fondly supposed that Aryan roots existed (if they could be found) for all words, but that was certainly not true of all English words. There were cases in which the closest and most immediate inquiry could not discover the origin of modern words. For example, the word ‘dude’ suddenly appeared in America, and, though investigation was made within a few weeks of the recognition of the word, no one could say how it originated. It came epidemically, so to speak, and it has remained.”

Contrary to this opinion, both the *Century* and

Standard Dictionaries ascribe a London origin to the word, which they identify with the "æsthetic movement," the "lily in the hand" idiocy, in the early eighties of the last century. Recently Professor Walter W. Skeat undertook to trace "dude" back to some German dialect. He found in Low German, dudeldop, dudendop, or dudelkop, a simpleton or sleepyhead, and then in East Frisian, duddig, stupid, and duddigheid and dudden and duddern, to be drowsy, and in Dutch, dodderig. He assumes the root to be Tod, the English "death," and cites many English words, in common use and in dialect, as connected with that root—dother, dote, doddy, doddle, dawdle, duddle, all having the sense of stupidity or slowness. "Neither," adds the learned Professor, "should we miss the Swedish dialect, dodolga or dodolja, of which the exact sense is dawdler." In Grimm's *Deutsche Mythologie* another Englishman has found the word dod, meaning coxcomb. Thus a word less than twenty years old may prove a very will-o'-the-wisp to such philologists as Professor William Dwight Whitney, Dr. G. P. G. Scott, Professor F. A. March, Jr., and Professor Edward S. Sheldon. But the scales of reasonable presumption are tipped in favor of Dr. Murray's theory, and the common impression among most people on both sides of the Atlantic is that the word "dude" is essentially American.

Nothing better illustrates the capriciousness in public taste than the shiftings of meaning in

words by use. It is said that the slang word "spread" originated at Cambridge University. It did not imply a profuse feast, however, but a poor one, spread over the table to make a show. Such changes of signification come under the head of what Professor Bréal calls the pejorative tendency of words. The Anglo-Saxon *saelig*, answering to the English *silly*, meant originally "happy, tranquil, inoffensive." One meaning of smart (*Schmerz* in German) has become synonymous with "sprightly, lively, pretty." "Brave" once meant "regret," "admirable" meant "surprising," "imp" meant "island," "to be amused" meant "to be occupied," "novelist" meant an "innovator," "pomp" meant a "procession," and so on.

Meanings alter even in scientific words. Hydrogen was named from the Greek *hudor*, water, and *gennao*, to generate. Oxygen is just as essential in the formation of water as is hydrogen; for the composition of water is H_2O —two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Hydrogen is an essential part of all acids, and, strictly speaking, therefore, should be called oxygen.

Oxygen was named by Lavoisieur, the founder of modern chemistry, in 1776, from *oxus*, meaning sharp, and *gennao*, because he supposed that oxygen was an essential part of every acid; hence the name "acid (sharp or sour) maker." The German word for oxygen is *Sauerstoff*, meaning an acid or sour substance—oxygen

Since the time of Lavoisieur, who was a victim of the French Revolution, having been guillotined in 1794, science has demonstrated that many acids may exist without oxygen in their composition, *e. g.*, hydrochloric, hydrobromic, hydrofluoric, etc. Tomlinson says: "The word oxygen is too deeply rooted in scientific nomenclature to be safely removed; but it may be taken as a remarkable instance of an abiding word which changed its original meaning within comparatively a short period after its introduction."

The standard quality of many words has always been disputed by certain critics, who object to their admission into the language as being without proper authority. Such words as "forestall," "fain," "scathe," "askance," "embellish," and "dapper" were objected to in Spenser's day, but they somehow gained a footing and have kept it. A number of Chaucer's words, *viz.*, "transcend," "bland," "sphere," "blithe," "franchise," "carve," "anthem," were considered obsolete in the seventeenth century, but one by one they were revived and are in the best of standing at the present day. Also in that epoch critics rejected as obsolete the words "plumage," "tapestry," "tissue," "ledge," "trenchant," "resource," "villainy," "strath," "thrill," "grisly," "yelp," "kirtle," "dovetail"—all of which are now indispensable. The word "encyclopedia" was unknown to Bacon, so he used the clumsy term "circle learning."

Fulke branded as inadmissible the words

“neophyte,” “homicide,” “scandal,” “destruction,” “tunic,” “despicable,” “rational.” In Heylin’s *Observations on L’Estrange’s History of Charles II.* (published in 1658) the following words were censured: “Oblique,” “radiant,” “adoption,” “caress,” “amphibious,” “horizontal,” “concede,” “articulate,” “destination,” “ocular,” “compensate,” “complicated,” “adventitious.”

The Rev. Dr. Burrowes (afterward Dean of Cork), in an “Essay on the Style of Doctor Johnson,” published in the first volume of the *Transactions of the Royal Irish Society* (1787), complains of certain words like “resuscitation,” “orbity,” “volant,” “fatuity,” “divaricate,” “asinine,” “narcotic,” “vulnerary,” “empireumatic,” “papilionaceous,” and many others of the same stamp which “abound in and disgrace” the pages of Johnson’s dictionary—notwithstanding the compiler’s claim that he has rarely admitted into it any word not authorized by former writers. And Burrowes asks where authorities are to be sought for these words as well as “for ‘obtund,’ ‘disruption,’ ‘sensory,’ or ‘panoply,’ all occurring in the short compass of a single essay in the *Rambler*? or for ‘cremation,’ ‘horticulture,’ ‘germination,’ and ‘decussation,’ within a few pages of his *Life of Browne*? They may be found, perhaps, in the works of former writers, but they make no part of the English language. They are the illegitimate offspring of learning by vanity.”

To this John Wilson Croker, in his edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, answers that by referring to Johnson's own dictionary Dr. Burrowes would "have found good authorities for almost every one of them; for instance, for 'resuscitation,' Milton and Bacon are quoted; for 'volant,' Milton and Phillips; for 'fatuity,' Browne; for 'germination,' Bacon, and so on. But although these authorities which Dr. Burrowes might have found in the dictionary are a sufficient answer to his question, let it be observed that many of these words were in use in more familiar authors than Johnson chose to quote, and that the majority of them are now become familiar, which is sufficient proof that the English language has not considered them as illegitimate."

Boswell himself naïvely says: "Johnson assured me that he had not taken upon himself to add more than four or five words to the English language, of his own formation; and he was very much offended at the general license, by no means modestly taken in his time, not only to coin new words, but to use words in senses quite different from their established meaning, and those frequently very fantastical."

In his great undertaking Johnson was beset by many difficulties which do not hamper the lexicographer of to-day. For one thing, etymology in a scientific sense was as yet non-existent, and so was archæology—a science which, though less than one hundred years old, has thrown so much light on the study of lan-

guages. To show his not too exalted opinion of his task he defined a lexicographer to be "a harmless drudge" in his dictionary. For a long time he shared the common illusion that by making a catalogue of its words a language might be fixed for good and all. But when his completed work appeared he explained very sensibly in his preface the vanity of any such expectation. He said it would be absurd to imagine that a language should remain unaltered which repeats all human thoughts and feelings that in themselves were constantly changing. And in another place he declared: "I am not so lost in lexicography as to forget that words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven."

In his very readable *Biography of Samuel Johnson* Leslie Stephen remarks: "To collect all the words in the language, to define their meanings as accurately as might be, to give the obvious or whimsical guesses at etymology suggested by previous writers, and to append a good collection of illustrative passages was the sum of his ambition. Any systematic training of the historical processes by which a particular language had been developed was unknown, and of course the result could not be anticipated. The work, indeed, required a keen logical faculty of definition and wide reading of the English literature of the two preceding centuries; but it could of course give no play for the higher faculties on points of scientific investigation. A

dictionary in Johnson's sense was the highest kind of work to which a journeyman could be set, but it was still work for a journeyman, not for an artist. He was not adding to literature, but providing a useful implement for future men of letters."

Horne Tooke, than whom there has been no closer student of the English language, called Johnson's dictionary a disgrace to the English people. It was far from that, but it may be said that the facilities for making acceptable dictionaries have vastly improved since Johnson's day. Whether the wisest methods have kept pace with these facilities is another story.

The member of a New York publishing house which has brought out a large dictionary informed me that no word was included in its vocabulary that has not received the sanction of literary usage, that being taken as the essential guarantee for its inclusion in the work. He has no knowledge of any newly coined words inserted in it, though a very large number of words are to be found there that are not to be found in any other dictionary, such as *tabloid*, *filofloss*, etc. But we should not place implicit confidence in that commercial spirit of our age which bases the value of a dictionary on the fact that it contains fifty thousand more words than any other ever issued in the English language. The question should be, Are they fit words? for on this point alone is to be decided the real merit of any dictionary.

From now onward into the indefinite future all consciously evolved words should be known in a more intimate and personal way—that is, we should know who are their authors and when and in what circumstances they are born. This must prove an attractive line of work for students of semantics. And here arise the questions, What constitutes a new word? and how is it formed?

Compounds are generally recognized as standing in the same position as new words. Bréal makes a new acceptance equivalent to a new word. This author also calls attention to the well-attested but somewhat surprising fact that modern languages have borrowed the suffixes most frequently in use. “Thus, Greek has helped us to form words in *-ism*, such as optimism, socialism; in *-ist*, such as artist, florist; in *-ise* (or *-ize*), such as authorize, fertilize. German has furnished the suffix *-ard*, as in the French *vantard*, *bavard*, the English *dastard*, *coward*, *bastard*; Italian, the suffix *-esque*, as in *gigantesque*, *romanesque*, *picturesque*.”

There are hundreds of prefixes and suffixes, and all have a more or less definite trend of meaning in themselves. Some are intensive, others negative; some show quality and relation; others have little apparent effect on the signification, but they lack the marrow and sinew of root words. They are the extremities of the verbal body: not its heart and vital organs.

Within itself the English language no longer has, as aforetime, the resources out of which new

words may be formed. For this reason foreign words are impressed into service and often receive such Saxon prefixes as *be*, *un*, *mis*, *under*, *over*, *after*, *out*; or such Saxon formative suffixes as *ness*, *dom*, *hood*, *ship*, *less*, *ful*, *some*, *ish*. French prefixes (some of them more remotely Latin) also are used, as *en*, *dis*, *re*, *inter*, *trans*, or French formative suffixes, as *ance*, *age*, *ment*, *ery*, *ity*, *let*, *ess*, *able*, *eons*, *ative*, etc. Separate particles like *up*, *off*, *by*, *to*, etc., assist in the patchwork, but the making of words wholly out of Anglo-Saxon material in these days is quite an unheard-of thing. It would not be an impossible feat by any means, but we English-speaking people have been taking academic terms from the Latin, Greek, and other languages for so many years that it has become a silly habit. Inherent Anglo-Saxon elements, therefore, compose but scantily our neologisms, and more's the pity.

Frequent are adverbial formations with prepositions like *pro* and *con*. *Un* is important; it may be prefixed to most English adjectives, to denote the absence of the quality designated by the adjective, as *unmindful*, *untaught*, *unwept*, etc., and to a limited class of nouns and verbs. In the case of a few nouns, "un" expresses "the absence or the contrary of that which the noun signifies, as *unbelief*, *undress*, *unrest*, and the like"; in the case of certain verbs it expresses "the contrary, and not the simple negative, of the action indicated by the verb."

The preposition *under*, as a prefix has numer-

ous figurative uses. *Re* is an inseparable particle in the composition of words denoting return, repetition, iteration. The termination of most of the early Anglo-Saxon infinitives was *an* or *ian*, *beon*, to be, become, being one of the few exceptions. These verbs were formed from nouns, sometimes from adjectives, and at a later period were compounded, as *utgan*, to go out, from *ut*, out, and *gan*, to go. Though the Anglo-Saxon has no future tense, this missing form was sometimes eked out by the use of the auxiliaries *wille* and *sceal* as in English, to express the future, "but generally, not without the idea of volition, or of necessity, which properly belongs to those words" (Professor Samuel M. Shute).

The principal Anglo-Saxon prefixes were employed as follows: *Un-*, not; *n-*, not; *mis-*, unlike, defective, erroneous; *wan-*, wanting; *to-*, to; *for-*, negation, and sometimes intensity; *wi* *er-*, against; *and-*, against; *ge-* has a collective sense; *be-*, sometimes privative, sometimes intensive; *ed-*, again; *sin-*, always; *sam-*, half; *aeg-* has an indeterminate sense.

For the most part the following nominal suffixes denote persons: *-a*, *-ere*, *-end*, *-e*, *-el*, *-ol*, *-l*, *-ing*, *-ling* (diminutives), *-en*, *-estre*.

Suffixes denoting state, condition, etc., include: *-dom*, *-had*, *scipe*, *lac*, *-a*, *-u*, *-least*; *-ung*, *-ing*; *-nes*, *-u*, *-eo*, *-o*, *-els*, *-ed*, *-m*, *-ot*, *-d*, *-t*, *-raden*.

Adjective suffixes are: *-e*, *-ig*, *-lic*, *-isc*, *-sum*, *-ol*, *-en*, *-baere*, *-cund*, *-iht*, *-weard*, *-feald*, *-leas*, *-wis*, *-ern*, *-tyme*.

Adverbial suffixes: -e, -lice, -um, -on, -es; -unga, -inga; -an, -der; -on, -an, -r, -ra, -e.

I append some of the more melodious old Anglo-Saxon adjectives:

Arful—respectable; favorable.

Breme, bryme—renowned.

Dyrne—hidden.

Ece—eternal.

Elfscine—elf-beautiful; handsome.

Ging—young; tender.

Grimlic—sharp; severe.

Hador—serene; clear.

Hal, hael—whole; sound; safe.

Halig—holy.

Sarlic—painful; sorrowful.

Inwidda—deceitful; wicked.

Modig—proud; irritable.

Rof—famous.

Ruh—rough; hairy.

Scine—splendid.

Sel—good; excellent.

Smylt—serene; gentle.

Wac—infirm; frail.

Weor—bad; miserable.

There is plenty of justification for new words of the right sort. They all have to pass through a probationary period. "Thinkers and philosophers," says Bréal, "have the privilege of creating new words which arrest attention by their amplitude and by the learned aspect of their structure. These words pass into the vocabulary of criticism and so gain currency among artists;

but once admitted into the studio of the painter or sculptor, they speedily come forth in order to spread through the world of industry and commerce, which makes use of them without measure or scruple. So that in a comparatively short time the vocabulary of metaphysics is helping to nourish the language of advertisement."

To trace the lineage of many words is simply impossible. They are of the parvenue class, without ancestry, though they have as near relatives in the dictionary as first cousins. If words could write their autobiographies, what a world of secrets they might reveal! What a flood of interest they might turn on human emotion, pride, selfishness, nobility, and all the rest of it!

One day the question asked itself in my mind: "How many of the leading American authors have invented one or more words?" The query haunted me with such persistence that I finally decided to learn from the authors themselves how far they had ventured in word-coinage. Certain American writers are not mentioned in these pages because their responses were too personal or too unworthy of them. Some well-known devotees of letters have wholly mistaken the spirit of my inquiries and dismissed the subject as beneath their notice; but it is well worth their attention as it is mine, and, luckily for my investigation, people are represented here whose authority cannot be questioned, though it should be frankly stated that the preponderance of opinion is against the promiscuous coining of

words. The convictions they have expressed in this matter should have weight with all tyros in literature and serve to warn those who have passed through their novitiate against the practice.

It is quite out of the question for any one person to keep track of the new words, that, like miniature meteors, flash across the horizon of letters. Many a verbal variant serves its purpose for some special use, but is not adopted into general usage. Its justification is imbedded, so to speak, in some definitive connection with other words for that one occasion. It provides a norm of meaning better than any combination of words could present. Alexander and Cæsar knew that twelve feet of sand turns the salt water of the sea into clear fresh water. So we should learn that words, new and old, filtered through the minds of many diverse personalities, at last attain to their highest degree of purity.

In closing this chapter I wish to quote two or three paragraphs from an article in the *Pall Mall Magazine* by the English critic, William Archer, on "The American Language." Mr. Archer says: "As American life is far more fertile of new conditions than ours, the tendency towards neologism cannot but be stronger in America than in England. America has enormously enriched the language, not only with new words, but (since the American mind is, on the whole, quicker and wittier than the English) with apt and luminous colloquial metaphors."

Again he says: "America doubles and trebles the number of points at which the English language comes in touch with nature and life, and is therefore a great source of strength and vitality. (The literary language, to be sure, rejects a great deal more than it absorbs; and even in the vernacular, words and expressions are always dying out and being replaced by others which are somehow better adapted to the changing conditions.) But though an expression has not, in the long run, proved itself fitted to survive, it does not follow that it has not done good service in its time. Certain it is that the common speech of the Anglo-Saxon race throughout the world is exceedingly supple, well nourished, and rich in forcible and graphic idioms; and a great part of this wealth it owes to America. Let the purists who sneer at Americanisms think how much poorer the English language would be to-day if North America had become a French or Spanish instead of an English continent.

"I am far from advocating a breaking down of the barrier between literary and vernacular speech. It should be a porous, permeable bulwark, allowing of free filtration; but it should be none the less distinct and clearly recognized. Nor do I recommend an indiscriminate hospitality to all the linguistic inspirations of the American fancy. All I say is that neologisms should be judged on their merits, and not rejected with contumely for no better reason than that they are new and (presumably) American."

All this is so conspicuously true, and comes so unexpectedly from an authoritative English writer, that it deserves the widest publicity in this country. Many scholars do not generally approve of neologisms, though they cannot tell how language is to grow or ever has grown without them; for every word must have been a neologism originally, even the verb *to be*. Slang, as we shall see, has played a remarkable part in the enrichment of our Indo-European vocabulary.

What we call "pure English" now is a very composite photograph, made up of the lines and outlines of thousands of linguistic faces, and I do not see where the dissecting knife would stop if with it we endeavored to anatomize this infinitely compound structure.

CHAPTER II.

WORDS AND LITERARY STYLE.

Oh, list, ye decadents of lyric skill :
Dip from your hearts the ruddy drops of thought,
And with them life's blank pages bravely fill
In words of rare mosaic beauty wrought :
Nor think yourselves immortal masters till
Your Art with God's own messages is fraught.

MEN of genius have been guilty of some queer word-coinages. Keats coined the impossible word *yearnful*; but this was not his gravest offense. The *Quarterly Review* of September, 1818, gave a harsh notice of John Keats' *Endymion*, which had appeared a few months previously. This periodical often has been blamed for causing the early death of Keats—with how much truth I know not. That portion of the criticism which it seems pertinent to quote here is as follows :

“We now present some of the new words with which, in imitation of Mr. Leigh Hunt, he adorns our language :

“We are told that turtles *passion* their voices, that an arbor is *nested*, and a lady's locks are *gordianed up*; and, to supply the place of the nouns thus verbalized, Mr. Keats, with great

fecundity, spawns new ones, such as *men-slugs* and *human serpentry*, the *honey-feel* of bliss, wives prepare *needments*, and so forth. Then he has formed new verbs by the process of cutting off their natural tails, the adverbs, and affixing them to their foreheads. Thus, the wine *out-sparkled*, the multitude *up-followed*, and night *up-took*; the wind *up-blows*, and the hours are *down-sunken*. But if he sinks some adverbs in the verbs, he compensates the language with adverbs and adjectives, which he separates from the parent stock. Thus a lady whispers *pantingly* and *close*, makes *hushing* sighs, and steers her skiff into a *ripply* cove, a shower falls *refreshfully*, and a vulture has a *spreaded* tail."

It is easy to believe how a delicately balanced and sensitive nature like that of Keats could have been hurt by so critical a cudgeling. (Still more mawkish and violent strictures on his work appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*.) But his name was writ in something less subject to evaporation than water, despite the phraseology of his self-made epitaph.¹ The mystery is that, with so subtle a sense of lyric form, so exquisite an apprehension of and delight in the beautiful, he ever should have bodied forth his sublimated thoughts in any words less nobly chosen than the ones in his "Ode to a Grecian Urn" or those in "The Eve of St. Agnes."

Perhaps Keats suffered from the defects of his qualities, as what poet does not? In the white

¹ "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

heat of composition a great deal of intellectual power goes to waste in the groping for rhymes. In fixed forms of versification the free flow of inspiration must necessarily be weakened, so that in most poets we find three or more commonplace lines to one of great strength or consummate beauty.

The late Eugene Field once told me he had at times some parrot and monkey struggles with the reluctant muse. There were days, he said, when she was out of sorts and obstinate, and then the mischievous rhymes tried their best to elude his pen. In these emergencies he resorted to the primitive method of audibly repeating the alphabet of monosyllables for some rhyming word that would fit and meet the nice requirements of syntax and prosody. For instance, if he desired a word rhyming with the termination *at*, he would commence with the first rhyming word *bat*, and proceed thus: *brat, cat, chat, fat, hat, mat, pat, rat, slat, that*, and so on. And thus he maundered among the plaguey rhymes until he made them tally in sound and sense.

It was rather difficult to credit this confession, and I intimated that he must be springing some occult joke on me; thereupon he solemnly protested that this system of capturing recalcitrant rhymes was a common expedient of his. Well, training does much for poets, as for everybody else, and it may be confidently stated that Mr. Field eventually brought his capricious muse to terms and obliged her to capitulate; for whatever may be its other deficiencies, his later metri-

cal work betrays none of those stilted, strained, mechanical devices which would indicate that he persisted in that crude, school-boy method of composition.

Now, in free verse the obstacles to which I have referred are largely removed: the poet may fairly reflect the glow of his soul, instead of garnering the mere ashes of his dreams. This accounts for the supreme power of the Psalms of David, the songs of Solomon, the best lines of Walt Whitman. Yet it is not every poet who dares to break away from the trammels of prosody. Genius is an emanation from the divine and may make its own rules, in a large measure. It can play truant from the rhetorical orbit with more or less impunity. It can be so temperamental as to set at defiance all accepted standards. But no man of moderate gifts in poesy can be an outlaw with safety. If he can say nothing worth saying in the established forms of his art, is it probable that he will be any more successful in some hybrid stanza of his own invention?

In the professional career of the late lamented Richard Hovey is to be noted a poet's heroic struggle between the influences of formalism and Walt Whitmanesque freedom. This struggle resulted in Mr. Hovey's compromising with both of these influences. In his last great poem, *Taliesin*, which he designates as a masque, more than thirty different verse forms are employed, though not all with equal charm or effect. His Greek Ionics and Alcaics are beautifully wrought,

but in this particular poem the nine-accent iambs seem to be the most powerfully employed of all his meters.

His purpose, of course, in using so many lyric forms and varied rhythms was to provide the most appropriate metrical medium for his thought. He aimed to be unconventional, and much may be said in defense of free and of even irregular verse forms. He was no more the slave of rules than is the bird; hence he achieved naturalness by methods which a fainter-hearted singer would not have touched. But Mr. Hovey was in no sense a revolutionist in thought or sentiment. He was reconciled to his own microcosm. It was he who wrote not long before his young and manly soul was taken away from this earth:

My soul melts like snow in the waters of thy joy;
Thy love is like a white silence;
The joy of death is in my soul.

I have mentioned Whitman. Ah, there was a magician with words! And when you heard him speak, you at once realized the atmosphere of one to whom the higher mysteries had been revealed, whatever might have been his other experiences. Upon one occasion we were talking, he and I, about various studies to which a writer should devote himself. "Rhetoric," said he, "is all well enough, but beware lest the rules dwarf you into a mere nonentity. A man who feels the message of life and has something to say will find a way of his own to say it. I

hate to see a chubby, rosy-cheeked boy, all mirth and animation, pressed hard against the grindstone of etiquette until he enters a parlor with as much austere dignity as his great grandfather, and says, very primly, 'Of whom were you speaking, mam-ma?' Such a boy, to my mind, is positively nauseating. God allows men to be boys first, so that they can kick around and cut up all sorts of monkey shins. And when they are compelled by their parents to be so sadly polite, it takes away all their charm and ginger. It is just so with a writer, who, a slave to rhetoric and such things, is afraid to say that his soul is his own."

But it should not be imagined that Whitman had no respect for the right word or for sincere and vivid art. Says one of his most loyal disciples, Horace L. Traubel, editor of *The Conservator*: "Whitman rebelled against old artistic forms, not because he was averse to form, but because he desired free volition and plenty of room. As to form in the abstract, his was most unmistakable and inexorable."

Another enthusiastic admirer of the "good gray poet" says that in the absolute use of words Whitman has few equals. You must go elsewhere if you want poetic tidbits. What appears in Whitman to be colossal egotism, as Bayard Taylor called it, is merely the expression of the universal man, as applicable to others as to himself; or, if you please, it is an egotism so vast that it merges into otherhood. William Dean

Howells called him "the apostle of the rough and uncouth." The answer to this may be found in John Burroughs' book on Whitman, as where he says: "We owe much to Emerson. But Emerson was much more a *made* man than was Whitman—much more the result of secondary forces, the college, the church, and of New England social and literary culture."

In another place this same clear-sighted lover and interpreter of nature says: "No man ever searched more diligently for the right word—for just the right word—than did Whitman. He would wait for days and weeks for the one ultimate epithet. How long he pressed the language for some word or phrase that would express the evening call of the robin, and died without the sight. . . . His matchless phrases seem like chance hits, so much so that some critics have wondered how he happened to *stumble* upon them. His verse is not dressed up, because it has so few of the artificial adjuncts of poetry—no finery or stuck-on ornament—nothing obtrusively beautiful or poetic; and because it bears itself with the freedom and nonchalance of a man in his everyday attire.

"But it is always in a measure misleading to compare language with dress, to say that a poet clothes his thought, etc. *The language is the thought*; it is an incarnation, not an outside tailoring. *To improve the expression is to improve the thought*. In the most vital writing the thought is nude; the mind of the reader touches

something alive and real. When we begin to hear the rustle of a pompous vocabulary, when the man begins to dress his commonplace ideas up in fine phrases, we have enough of him. Indeed, it is only the mechanical writer who may be said to clothe his ideas with words; the real poet thinks through words."

To have a complete grasp of the meaning of the foregoing paragraph is to know what true poetry is and how to judge it. To be sure, we are not all elemental in what our minds put forth. Our intellectual palates differ, and it is a wise dispensation that we are not all alike. The hardy man of the mountain best relishes coarse, substantial fare; the lazy epicure craves food that is highly seasoned with condiments and currie. One man's meat is another man's poison; one man's honey is another man's gall. The words of some poems fall upon our consciousness like the manna that descended upon the Israelites, "in which were all manner of tastes; and every one found in it what his palate was chiefly pleased with. If he desired fat in it, he had it. In it young men tasted bread; the old men honey; and the children oil."

If we concede that great poets and great orators are born, not made, it is nevertheless wide of the truth to say that by the mere force of untaught nature a man can write a good poem or make a good speech. While the power of expression is a gift, supreme proficiency in literary composition, however rich and varied may be

one's endowments, can be gained only by strenuous and long-continued work. The study of manuals of composition and of formal treatises on the art of writing is an important aid to methodical knowledge; but it is absurd to believe that rhetorical rules alone will suffice to teach a man a flawless style. He may cultivate his sensibilities and strengthen his mental faculties by discipline; but he cannot quicken the flow of his own ideas by the servile imitation of formulas. In trying to be natural we often end in being unique; but some men could have a magnetic literary style no more than a magnetic personality. It is not in them.

It is a pathetic thing that many people are absolutely incapable of telling a good from a bad poem. Everything that has jingle and rhyme is a poem to them. They have no sense of metrical form, are mentally color-blind to the dazzling hues of words, and alike are deaf to lyric harmonies, just as many poor mortals cannot tell one tune from another. But more unfortunate than aught else, they are too obtuse to feel the impassioned throb of inspiration.¹ They are like Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*:

¹ "Fair are the flowers and the children, but their subtle suggestion is fairer,
Rare is the roseburst of dawn, but the secret that clasps it is rarer;
Sweet the exultance of song, but the strain that precedes it is sweeter,
And never was poem yet writ, but the meaning out-mastered the meter."—Richard Realf.

A primrose by a river's brim,
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

What a miraculous contrast to this kind of opacity is the poet's own spiritual apprehension, as voiced in his immortal ode:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ;
The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.

A good illustration of the vast difference between the mental attitude of the great artist toward nature and life and that of the feckless, narrow, matter-of-fact mind, occurs in W. W. Story's two poems, *Padre Bandelli* and *Leonardo Da Vinci*, which I heartily commend to the reader.

There are those who say that to be sure of heaven we must take heaven with us when we die. In an analogous way, what we get out of certain authors depends largely upon what we bring to them. There are things in the writings of Dante, Shakespeare, and Browning that probably no one comprehends, though, in a way, they may be apprehended. From the world of ideals many people seem to be barred congenitally. And yet how often we meet men and women of sciolistic culture who pretend to be idealists ! If you have lived *In the Forest of Arden*, like Hamilton W. Mabie and *Rosalind*, you already know the untold value of insight—not only to

those who produce works of art and literature, but to all who would truly understand and enjoy them.

The average writer soon learns his limitations. The more he goes in for exquisite literary analysis, the better he knows that—

. . . There are some thoughts beyond the reach
Of our imperfect speech.

Because they hover but vaguely in the background of the mind. He perceives that they are well worth an arduous pursuit, but they elude capture; they are too volatile to hold in solution of language. Marie Bashkirtseff confided to her *Diary*: "If I took heed I could write very correctly; but it seems to me that certain incoherent thoughts require a perfect artlessness of expression."

To drift on the current of fancy may be all right, when judgment is at the helm. Many writers depend upon the inspiration of the moment and make the best of it. They bring to bear upon very poor material sometimes the wizardry of words, the little touches, which transform it into a thing of beauty. Sitting down on one occasion to write a poem, without a definite topic in his mind, Robert Burns began thus:

Which way the subject theme may gang,
Let time or chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang—
Or probably a sermon.

But the Promethean triumphs of mountain-minded genius! Jean Paul says somewhere that the conceptions of the greatest works of genius came to their authors like a flash. Of course, all the details were not rounded out in one swift revelation, but a series of pictures were grouped together in the mind by those rapid combinations of which only the imagination is capable. It is probable that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *Divina Commedia*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Faust*, and a few other powerful creations, so called, were conceived in this way. The theme or motif of each may be stated in a single sentence. Why then is it illogical to say that the conceptions of such works came in the form of mere titles or names?

Rather different considerations from those submitted earlier in this chapter in relation to poetry attach themselves to a survey of the methods and style of our best prose writers. When a young writer takes a dislike to using big, ungainly words, it ought to be, if it isn't, a sign that he is beginning to form a proper style of his own. In our callow years we shoot wide of the mark in trying to convey our ideas—if indeed we have any worth writing out. Close thinking is neither a trait nor a habit of young minds. During the period of adolescence we are what Doctor Johnson called *faint* thinkers. It is next to impossible to develop our mental negatives into faithful verbal pictures. We commit heterophemy (see p. 71) over and over again.

The logical faculty veers with every wind of argument that touches it, and is like a fledgling bird that on first trying its wings flutters breathlessly to the ground. Here and there some precocious lad like Pope lisps in numbers and the numbers come, but even such exceptions may not be taken very seriously. Premature genius, like premature fruit, soon decays and dies.

Even the ripest scholarship may not insure to a person a literary style at once clear like Macaulay's and distinguished like John Morley's. Nearly every vestige of the once voluminous works of Varro, the most learned of the Romans, perished because they were destitute of art. The Greeks were the makers of style in writing. The art of putting things so that the words for which they stand will impress, persuade, and convince is the secret of style, so far as it can be defined in a nutshell. Style is a means and not an end. Some women have the knack of lending charm to their attire, though it be very simple, by the way they carry themselves. They know how to wear their clothes. A few feminine touches will work magic in the general effect of the most common raiment. On the other hand, how many women do we see who have a dowdy or slovenly or bizarre appearance, no matter how costly and elaborate may be their costume. There is a vulgarity in the superfluities of dress and ornament which reflects on the good taste of the wearer.

So it is in writing. The shoddy phrase

monger soon makes himself ridiculous to all sensible readers. The lettered snob, the intellectual dandy, soon betrays himself; his mimic fire gives one the chills; his headlong fluency leads him into ludicrous pitfalls. The cheap, third-rate quidnunc always tries to hide his defects or lack of thought behind a showy screen of alien, perhaps effete, words that only befog his own fat wits.

The late Stephen Crane's first literary success was paradoxical in that he graphically described scenes of war and carnage in which he had had no personal experience. *The Red Badge of Courage* won plaudits from veterans in military technique for its accuracy of description, which goes to prove that the clairvoyance of the imagination is sometimes a very good substitute for the actual experience of an author. The later stories of Mr. Crane showed that he was getting back to nature and to the memories of his boyhood—a fine symptom. As a war correspondent in the field his work was handicapped by facts and lacked that quality of spontaneity and perspective which made his fiction so delightful. He had a remarkable metonymic gift, as effective in its way as the archaic talent of Stanley J. Weyman. Mr. Crane employed this gift with less felicity in his verse, where it usually makes the most distinguished showing, than in his prose. In fact, Mr. Crane's genius was not strictly of a poetic order. In striving for strength he evolved hybrid and amorphous meters destitute of rhythm

and melody. In other words, he did not have the poet's ear for music. Yet he left some of the most drastic and picturesque prose that was penned during the last decade of the last century.

Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll says: "When the word or phrase comes along, undelaying, and fit, it is best. In the language of the really great writer, there are no synonyms." At the first blush this seems a rather extravagant statement. Let us see if it is. Perhaps no two words have exactly the same meaning, but many have a similar meaning. If this be true, then synonyms are not identical, but approximate. They seem, however, such close equivalents of each other that they are familiarly used in an interchangeable manner; but we often see how the faulty use of synonyms leads to violations of precision. Loose diction is full of pleonasm and often goes arm in arm with a strutting, thrasonical, and pavonine style.

The great number of so-called synonyms in the English language is due to its formation. Norman-French words were superimposed upon the Anglo-Saxon speech, with the result that there are many words of primitive English and Norman origin now in the language which exist side by side and express very similar ideas. It is because of this fact probably that so many persons think we have an embarrassment of synonyms.¹

¹ "An analogous difference appears in comparing the synonyms in two languages: *clergyman* and *ecclésiast*."

De Mille's definition, it seems to me, comes nearest to being satisfactory : "Synonymous words may be said to be similar as to their general meaning, but dissimilar as to their specific meaning." It should be remembered that language is sometimes used to disguise or to conceal thought. Likewise is it an approved canon that an essential aim of art is to conceal art, and this aim has been carried to such perfection in literature as to create many an illusion of a writer's freshness of impressions and spontaneity.

In his very instructive book, *Every-Day English*, Richard Grant White says: "It is true, in a certain sense, with but few exceptions, words have but one meaning; that is, the radical and essential meaning of the word exists so as to be perceivable, and so as to be a constant guide to its right use. At the same time most words, if not indeed all, are used with such a degree of vagueness, small though it be, such a lack of perfect consent and identical apprehension among all the users, that possibly no word has exactly the same meaning to any two persons." George Eliot

tique, *God* and *Dieu*, *liebe* and *amour*, *brio* and *brilliant*, *girl* and *jeune fille*, do not respectively mean the same things, though we translate one by the other. The two words of each couple represent two different objects and are differently understood by the two peoples. Their sense is the same in the rough; the details of their meanings are different and untranslatable in the absence of similar objects and emotions in the two cases."—H. Taine.

says in *Middlemarch*: "The meaning we attach to words depends on our feeling."

Professor Whitney mentions as a reason in favor of the adoption of a certain word (reliable) its "enrichment of the language by a synonym which may yet be made to distinguish a valuable shade of meaning."

The popular meaning of a word may not at all include its literary content. It takes on and loses values according to the individuality of the writer.¹ Used subjectively, it may be scarcely more distinct than a haze-veiled mountain; while in an objective form it may help to paint a grand picture or appeal to some salient emotion.

But if the great writer needs no synonyms, which I am inclined to doubt, he sometimes, especially if he be a scientist or a philosopher, comes to a gap which he cannot fill with technical nicety by any known word in his language. It is then he must call upon his invention to frame a word to serve his purpose, one, of course, formed on a reasonably good analogy. Thus Comte invented the word *altruism*; Professor Huxley the word *agnostic* (see p. 67), Dr. James McCosh the word *miriagnostic* (see p. 67), Dr. Andrew T. Sill the word *osteopath*, coined on the analogy of *homeopath*, etc.—one who practises *osteopathy*,² which refers nearly all diseases and their treatment to

¹ "We all imbue words with meanings of our own."
—John Burroughs.

² This comparatively new school of doctors administers no drugs.

the bones; and Max Nordau the words *plusiology*, the science of wealth, and *macrobioty*, the science of old age. Even Eugene Field's words defining the various phases of book mania may be included in this category: *Biblioparanoiacs*, or such as seek merely the name of being book-lovers; *bibliophrodisiacs*, such as imagine they love books; *bibliocranks*, such as have a madness in a certain line and tolerate no other line; *bibliomaniac*, a well-rounded, symmetrical, and hopelessly incurable collector. The last is not a coinage of Mr. Field's, however: it was used fifty years ago by F. Somner Merryweather, an English writer.

The word *truthful* at one time gave offense to philologists in England, because it was said to be an Americanism. In commenting on this word William Archer rightly urges that "it is not only a vast improvement on the stilted 'veracious,' but one of the prettiest and most thoroughly English words in the dictionary."

Richard Grant White was not opposed to new words that are perfectly eligible and necessary. His opinion, as expressed in the introduction to his book, *Words and Their Uses*, was this: "New words, when they are needed and are rightly formed, and so clearly discriminated that they have a meaning peculiarly their own, enrich a language; while the use of one word to mean many things, more or less unlike, is the sign of poverty in speech, and the source of ambiguity, the mother of confusion. For these reasons the

objection on the part of a writer upon language to a word or a phrase should not be that it is new, but that it is inconsistent with reason, incongruous in itself, or opposed to the genius of the tongue into which it has been introduced. Something must and surely will be sacrificed in language to convenience; but too much may be sacrificed to brevity. A periphrasis which is clear and forcible is not to be abandoned for a shorter phrase, or even a single word, which is ambiguous, barbarous, grotesque, or illogical. Unless much is at stake, it is always better to go clean and dry-shod a little way about than to soil our feet by taking a short cut."

The pedantic prejudices of purists seldom either kill or exile new words that are cordially accepted by the people. "Only a dead language," says Brander Matthews, "can get along without neologisms, without a steady stream of new words, new uses, new phrases, new idioms. In Latin it may be proper enough for us to set up a Ciceronian standard and to reject any usage not warranted by the masterly orator; but in English it is absurd to set up any merely personal standard and to reject any term or any idiom because it was unknown to Chaucer, or to Shakespeare, to Addison or to Franklin, to Thackeray or to Hawthorne."

In his essay on "Mirabeau and the French Revolution," Macaulay mentions "conservative" as "the new cant word." That was in 1832. Since then the word has become strongly rooted

in the language. Oliver Goldsmith, in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, introduced the word "fudge," which survives to this day, and so far as I know is in good repute. Rudyard Kipling coined the word *curtiosity*, which means the asking of "ever so many questions." It may perish with the book in which it appeared, or it may reach a venerable age like fudge—who knows? We have many examples of the paronym—a word that exactly represents a word in another language, differing from it only in some slight modification. Thus nerve is a paronym of Latin *nervus*; muscle, of *musculus*; canal, of *canalis*. In some writers we perceive a grah for tropology—that is, changing the original import of a word. Kipling has a bold and, for the most part, happy faculty in this way.

To have the mind steeped in an atmosphere for literary purposes is to have it also thoroughly stored, if need be, with archaic words and terms. For three or four years Thomas Moore pored over books of travel in the Orient before writing *Lalla Rookh*. When the poem appeared, nearly everybody inferred that the author must have lived in the Valley of Cashmere. Gustave Flaubert went to Tunis, and then to the ruins of Carthage, where he remained for a long time, in order to gather local color and terminology for his masterpiece, *Salammbô*. By the way, for penning *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert was brought before the *Tribune Correctionnelle de Paris* in 1857. It was claimed by *l'Avocat Imperial* that

Christian morality condemns realistic literature—not because it paints the passions, like hate, vengeance, and love—but because it paints them without restraint, without limit. Art without law or principle is not art. It is like a beautiful woman who indelicately exposes her person. To impose upon art the single rule of public decency is not to reduce it to extreme dependence, but to honor it. M. Lenard, in defense, said that the book was in the interests of morals and religion, as it pictured the end of the woman who committed suicide. He insisted that the book was realistic, because it was not the gross materiality of things which it advanced, but the human sentiment—what the soul perceives through the senses. The proceedings against the author fell to the ground. The pleadings and arguments were published and bristle with French casuistry. Many novelists and dramatists make close-range studies of localities, as did Flaubert, before laying their scenes and choosing their personages—Kipling, for instance. Without these precautions and this preparation their work would be full of anachronisms, which would be detected at once by the alert and exacting public.

*Unity in variety*¹ was the old Greek motto as

¹ “The perfect writer will express himself as Junius when in the Junius frame of mind; when he feels as Lamb felt, will use a like familiar speech, and will fall into the ruggedness of Carlyle when in Carlylean mood. Now he will be rhythmical and now irregular; here his language will be plain and there ornate; sometimes his sentences will be balanced and at other times

applied to style. By way of giving a fillip to his diction, Laurence Sterne would insert a quaint epigram now and then. One of these—viz., “The Lord tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” most people familiarly quote as coming from the Bible. But it is found in that model for all literary workers, *A Sentimental Journey*. It was on account of this picturesque saying that Tom Appleton once playfully recommended that the Corporation of Boston should, for the sake of improving the climate there, place a shorn lamb at the northeast corner of the Common.

The manner of writing obviously enough depends upon the manner of thinking. Clearly to understand the subject in hand is the first requirement; but I do not purpose to thresh over the principles of style, which have been so ably treated by Buffon, Herbert Spencer, and others. Mr. Spencer shows that the more energy is required to get the writer’s meaning from his words, the less will be left for the thought, and that the

unsymmetrical; for a while there will be considerable sameness, and again great variety. His mode of expression naturally responding to his state of feeling, there will flow from his pen a composition changing to the same degree that the aspects of the subject change. . . . And while his work presents to the reader that variety needful to prevent continuous exertion of the faculties, it will also answer to the description of all highly organized products, both of man and of nature; it will be not a series of like parts simply placed in juxtaposition, but one whole made up of unlike parts that are mutually dependent.”—From Herbert Spencer’s essay on “The Philosophy of Style.”

writer therefore should aim to economize the reader's energy by making the expression as transparent as possible. To convey thought and not mere words is the purpose of writing, though mental development, to say nothing of literature, could not go far without language. Such models as Bacon, Macaulay, and Addison are worth giving many days and nights to; but these authors had their intellectual failings. Richard Grant White has toppled over some of the popular notions as to the elegant English of Addison; and Bacon and Macaulay are not beyond just criticism.

Professor Huxley's suggestions as to style are excellent. "The business of a young writer," he declares, "is not to ape Addison or De Foe, but to make his style himself as they made their styles themselves. They were great thinkers, in the first place, because by dint of learning and thinking they had acquired clear and vivid conceptions about one or other of the many aspects of men and things. In the second place, because they took infinite pains to embody those conceptions in language exactly adapted to convey them to other minds. In the third place, because they possessed that purely artistic sense of rhythm and proportion which enabled them to add grace to force, and, while loyal to truth, made exactness subservient to beauty. If there is any merit in my English now, it is due to the fact that I have by degrees become awake to the importance of

the three conditions of good writing which I have mentioned."

The constructive powers of the mind are peculiarly affected by words, which actually suggest ideas, and they in turn, by association, suggest others. John Dryden was frank enough to acknowledge that a rhyme had often helped him to an idea. Whole systems of philosophy have been built upon a few words—employed in an arbitrary or dogmatic sense.

Read Holy Writ if you would gain mental as well as moral and spiritual stimulus, and remember that words, though they should be the natural imprints of thought, are really much more than any one thing or any hundred things to which they have been likened. To one man they may be the manna of culture; to another an exhilarating draught of ideas; to still another fuel to the flame of his emotions. They may be the coin from the die or the coin from the hand. They may be as though machine-made or a natural product like an apple or a daisy, but above all *they are vital, living things*. And appreciating this all-important truth, men of genius will use them as such and embody their conceptions in words that breathe not less than their thoughts.

The present writer is convinced that hitherto the intellectual and psychologic aspects of language, especially of English, have been too much neglected for the mechanical side, including grammar and rhetoric.

Professors Greenough and Kittredge, in their recent book entitled *Words and their Ways in English Speech*, insist, with excellent arguments, that language is poetry, because it is metaphorical and imaginative. Is this not virtually implying that language is psychologic? Certainly they have made a psychologic study of the English language in this extremely valuable work. In several places they speak of what was *felt* to be the sense and meaning of certain words at certain epochs. But they say this: "It is, of course, absurd to ascribe feeling to language, except in a metaphorical way. Fortunately, however, the vague syntax of composition allows the German word (*Sprachgefühl*, or 'speech-feeling') to mean a 'feeling *for* speech' as well as 'feeling *of* speech,' and by-and-by we shall either adopt the term as an English word, or the feeling itself will accept some other suitable phrase to express the idea, for the *Sprachgefühl* is a very real thing in a long-cultivated language like our own. It affects every word that we utter, though we may think that we are speaking as the whim of the moment dictates; and thus it is the strongest and most pervasive of all conservative forces. . . . Men of genius may take great liberties with their mother tongue without offence; but let them once run counter to its characteristic tendencies, let them violate the English *Sprachgefühl*, and their mannerism becomes, as it were, a foreign language. They are not writing English, but—say Carlylese."

The principle underlying all human speech is suggested by the obvious imitation which accompanies all natural signs. But language is not purely conventional, as has been wrongly inferred from the fact that a tacit convention between the speaker and the hearer is necessary to the adoption of a common language. Apart from its uses, language itself, in its complete articulated structure, is one of the grandest triumphs of imaginative reason.¹ At the very dawn of recorded history it came full-panoplied in the glorious strength of its maturity. Yet its inventors were not scientifically conscious of its mode of formation, or of the elementary articulations of sounds of which its words were composed. Not less surprising is the fact that, though the parts of speech (of the Greek tongue) had been distinguished, the principles of etymology were not clearly discerned, nor was the relation among its cognate tongues discovered, during the whole period of its greatest vitality and polish. It was not until the eighteenth century that the brilliant scholar, Sir William Jones, gave the impulse which produced the modern school of comparative philology. Much credit is also due to Carl Brugmann and his colleagues for tracing the Indo-European languages to a common source.

The processes of linguistic growth often seem to be merely mechanical, but they are really under a purposeful influence from the moment

¹ James G. Murphy, *The Human Mind*, p. 275.

they enter into the final stage of conscious construction. It is true, the consciously evolved word rarely belongs to popular literature, but to the nomenclature of science. Yet these arbitrarily formed words do not always and of necessity remain learned. If there be need of them among a majority of the people, they will become popular. But they are subject to alterations of meaning quite as much as the words whose origin cannot be traced. And many words, figurative at first, gradually take on a variety of secondary meanings and are raised to a generic sense, including a number of specific senses; slang terms go through many extensions and changes of meaning before they are lifted to the dignity of legitimate words, and many are abandoned to their fate as without the robust quality necessary to their preservation. Placing new meanings on old words therefore involves as much conscious effort as coining new ones, and this work helps to keep our language aligned to the spirit of our national literature.

The psychologic method of developing language is steadily taking the place of the old desiccated formulas of grammar, just as the real logic of to-day has sprung from the ancient dust of formal logic. It is studied with reference to its dynamic functions rather than to its artificial patchwork. Its growth even has been recognized as similar to the process known as the evolutionary hypothesis in biology, wherein the animal is conceived as evolving by successive differentiations out of a

single drop of jelly-like protoplasm ; and at least by one college professor (Dr. Fred Newton Scott) it has been treated in terms of pathology, in a striking paper entitled *Diseases of English Prose*. We speak of writers like Henry Van Dyke and Edith Wharton as having great powers of visualization ; of putting words together in such vivid form that we see all they wish us to see and from their own psychic viewpoint. The following passage from the preface in H. Taine's work, *On Intelligence*, is full of suggestion to those who are interested in this phase of the subject : " History is applied psychology. . . . The historian notes the total transformations presented by a particular human molecule or group of human molecules ; and, to explain these transformations, writes the psychology of the molecule or group ; Carlyle has written that of Cromwell : Sainte-Beuve that of Port Royal ; Stendhal has made twenty attempts on that of the Italians ; M. Renan has given us that of the Semitic race. Every perspicacious and philosophical historian labors at that of a man, an epoch, a people, a race : the researches of linguists, mythologists, and ethnographers have no other aim ; the task is invariably the description of a human mind or of the characteristics common to a group of minds ; and what historians do with respect to the past, the great novelists and dramatists do with the present."

In her beautiful psychologic study of "The Metaphor," Miss Gertrude Buck, an instructor in

English in Vassar College, has written a monograph that deserves an abiding appreciation. She takes issue with many authorities, from Aristotle to Spencer, as to the two principal forms of metaphor, and her discussion of these mooted questions is both thorough and convincing. In one passage she sums up thus : "Specialization in language follows at some distance specialization of thought ; and the recognition of any expression once simple as metaphorical marks the social demand for a division of labor on the part of language which shall make it adequate to the growing differentiation of thought it represents. If a definition be required, radical metaphor arises when a thought has outgrown its form of expression. It is the bursting of a double branching significance from the single sheath of language once adequate to contain it." Miss Buck indulges in the term *metaphoraphobia*—as "only the logical consequence of the faith that metaphor arises from the desire of the writer to produce a certain effect upon the reader." A little before that, in dealing with the poetic metaphor, she argues sagely that "a piece of writing which seeks only to lay bare the writer's thought ; with no reference at all to the capacity or interests of the reader, is condemned as bad art ; and no less is the work found wanting which looks only to its effect on the reader, little caring to be true to the vision of him who writes. And of this last sort must be the metaphor which is made for the sake of pleasing the reader, if no real sight of the

writer lies behind." Then she clearly traces the metaphor process on its way to plain statement, where it is sure to land sooner or later, and finally reaches the conclusion that there is "no limit to the new situations of which our expanding universe and our expanding selves are capable. Metaphor, while a stage in the perceptive process which must always be superseded by plain statement, must as certainly recur in a new perceptive process, though one metaphor may die into abstract speech, another rises out of the very extension and complication of experience which the former process of growth and death has afforded. To paraphrase Swinburne's assertion,¹ 'metaphors perish, but metaphor shall endure.'"

We are now beginning to see that "words are the soul's ambassadors," as Howell phrases it. Benjamin Ide Wheeler says that "language is art's most supple, most familiar clay." From a psychologic point of view this definition is too restricted. I prefer Madame Swetchine's: "There are words which are worth as much as the best actions, for they contain the germ of them all." Or this one of Joubert's: "Words become luminous when the finger of the poet touches them with his phosphorus." Whipple, who said: "Nothing is rarer than the use of a word in its exact meaning," was one of the comparatively few Americans of his time who understood that *the most precious element in language is its hu-*

¹ "Men perish, but man shall endure; lives die, but the life is not dead."—*Hymn of Man*.

manity and humanistic purpose. When we speak of language as merely plastic, as capable of being molded and twisted and distorted, we are viewing but a small segment of it.

The Bible has this pretty Eastern simile: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," but no attempt is made here to tell what a word actually is. Of the power and effect of a word Walter Savage Landor speaks in this wise: "On a winged word hath hung the destiny of nations." Words that bubble from a heart full of joyance or that are gasped in anguish; words that thrill one's whole being with love or courage, or crush the spirit with grief; words that come flame-plumed from the furnace of the brain—are these forever to be treated as the swaddlings or garments of thought? Perhaps when thought is like a mummy its most befitting garb is verbal ceremonies; but when it is alive, let us look elsewhere than to our wardrobes for comparisons.

A frequent verbal *mésalliance* is that of a feeble noun and a strong adjective, which reminds me of something to be said anent the latter. If the nine parts of English speech were conscious of fatigue, like human beings, there can be no doubt that the poor adjective, overworked at all hours of the day and night, with no vacations or holidays or rest even on Sundays, would feel a degree of lassitude bordering on coma. It certainly would be in no proper state to be drawn upon for all kinds of haphazard, extravagant, ludicrous, bitter, in

short, universal, service, which now, as a helpless, inanimate symbol, it performs through the instrumentality of its perfervid users.

We do not have to dip into grammar very far to prove that the adjective is an important factor of language. It is so volatile an ingredient, however, and so readily mixes, whether with oil or water, or both, that even literary chemists often make strange and absurd compounds by a too liberal use of it. Like wax, many adjectives solidify just under their melting-point.

The writers of epic and heroic poetry—the real classicists—have never overworked the adjective, because their narratives demanded the use of the verb and the adverb, and the concrete suggestions of names and places and men and things, all belonging to the noun department. Nor do the great essayists bury their thoughts under piled-up cairns of adjectives. Going back no further than to Emerson, listen to this stroke of his mental bell: “All things are moral, and in their boundless changes have an unceasing reference to spiritual nature. Therefore is nature glorious with form, color, and motion, so that every globe in the remotest heaven, every chemical change of vegetation, from the first principle of growth in the eye of a leaf to the tropical forest and antediluvian coal mine, every animal function from the sponge up to Hercules, shall hint or thunder to man the laws of right and wrong and echo the Ten Commandments. Therefore is nature ever the ally of religion;

lends all her pomp and riches to the religious sentiment."

This is selected at random from Emerson's essay on "Nature," and the purpose of the quotation is to suggest how sparingly Emerson uses the adjective. And you will find in reading Emerson that he exercises a patrician regard for the value of words in his use of the adjective.

One of the outlaws to be considered in this connection is the cheap novelist. The untrained scribbler glibly makes use of the adjective as though his point of view must be accepted if he trains enough of this sort of ordnance on the object of his praise or scorn. As to the newspaper use of words, unsurveyed miles are left for improvement, especially as concerns the employment of the adjective.

A common fault is the use of the superlative degree for everything, so that force is altogether lost by reason of the instinctive discount of the printed statement by the reader. Discrimination in the use of the adjective implies a careful study of words, which not unjustly may be called one of the neglected American virtues. "It is general culture above all, it is the constant submission of a teachable, apprehensive mind to the influence of minds of the highest class, in daily life and in books that brings out upon language its daintiest bloom and its richest fruitage." (White.)

The wilding words of the rural districts have a charm of their own which no scholastic burnish-

ing could improve in luster. They are the corn-fed words, as one might say. Those words which belong to the *elichés* of criticism pall on us at times; we are cloyed by those symbols of the *presciéuse* which exist to-day, as in Molière's time. Who does not like language that smacks of the soil, that has the spicy odor of native herbs? Dr. Felix Adler said in a lecture on Kipling: "With his grip on words whose roots smell of the earth from which he has dug them, he believes the whole white race to be the chosen instruments of God to carry Western ideas to enlighten the East."

To the extent that we realize its primary and historical sense, substantiate its past worth and anew in our turn further it, what we may, on its course of development, are we entitled to the use of a word. If the word of a writer be a mere conventional counter, then the whole writing composed of such counters is of like character.

We are known as thoroughly by the words we use as by the company we keep, and it should be the lofty aim of every man of letters to pass each word along—enhanced in meaning—with somewhat of the aroma of his own intellectual nature, as the poet Virgil was said to touch upon no subject but to adorn it.

CHAPTER III.

FOSTER WORDS, VARIANTS, AND BY-PRODUCTS.

NOAH WEBSTER, in the preface to his Dictionary (edition of 1828), mentions the number of words in the English language as being between 70,000 and 80,000. About three times that number have crept into the language within the last sixty years, some of them for only an ephemeral existence, while others, once classed as slang or vulgarisms, are to-day permanent adjuncts of it. Probably less than 20 per cent. of these words were consciously evolved. They came spontaneously and without premeditation.

Though the mint of language is not all outdoors, learned academies have often tried and generally failed to coin new words. For instance, a Committee of the French Academy has in charge the compilation of the Academy Dictionary. An interesting account of the proceedings of that Committee, which has so long been the butt of humorists, was given recently in the *Echo de Paris*.

“The Committee consists of six members, and meets once a week. At each meeting M. Gaston Boissier calls upon his brother academicians to

read out the definitions which they have undertaken to draw up. The reading done, M. Boissier adjourns to a desk on which an old Littré is lying. He reads a few words with Littré's definitions, and asks who will undertake to compose a new definition.

"As a rule, each member of the Committee tries to pass the duty on to some one else. M. Gérard draws attention to the competence of M. Brunetière; M. Mezières insists eloquently on the competence of M. Lavedam.

"When the words have been assigned, and the meeting is on the point of adjourning, some one timidly proposes the adoption of a new word. There is a storm—a perfect babel of tongues. The new word is almost invariably rejected; and then the members of the Committee go home."

In the order of heirship, sovereignty has been recognized as a Law of the Unavoidable; and I think this law applies to language. Considered as a unit of a community, a man is subject to certain unavoidable laws. As a unit of language, so is a word. Though perfectly free as an individual, a man is bound to live in subjection as a member of a community. A word is likewise conditioned. Formalities to which he has never consented and from which he cannot escape govern all the acts of a man's life. Similar formalities control words.

The principle of sovereignty is the outgrowth of this aggregate of necessities which compel the submission of man. Still the parallel holds good

as to a word. By applying this principle to the life of nations we derive its succession, a principle which governs men and societies, a law belonging to the moral world and therefore beyond the control of man. Is this not true of language? When this law is misunderstood and transgressed, anarchy and misfortune follow, both in society and in language.

Occasion is the factor that guarantees the stamp of popular validity to new words. The late war in South Africa brought to the surface such expressive words as: *Berg*, a mountain; *biltong*, dried meat; *commando*, a Boer army; *commandeer*, to requisition; *donga*, a water hole; *dorp*, a village; *drift*, a ford; *fontein*, a spring; *klip*, a stone; *kloof*, a ravine; *kopje*, a hillock; *kraal*, a native village; *lager*, a camp; *mealies*, Indian corn; *nek*, a saddle connecting two hills; *pan*, a sheet of water; *pont*, a ferry; *poort*, a pass between mountains; *sluit*, a dry ditch; *spruit*, a small stream; *taal*, the Boer language; *trek*, to march; *Uitlander*, a non-burgher; *veldt*, the prairie; *vlei*, a small lake; *zarp*, policeman.

In New England, many years ago, the Dutch word "boer" was translated *boor*, and accepted in the modern English sense. Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer says: "These New World terms, indeed, are parallel in spirit to one that is still commonly used in the Old and the New World both, and in New York as well as New England. When, to mark his dullness or awkwardness, we call a man a 'Dutchman,' we fancy that we are

referring to German traits, although with an incorrect word. But we are really echoing the jealousy, masked as contempt, that England long ago developed for her great rival, Holland."

The adoption of the foregoing Boer words means nothing more than assimilating them, but the anglicizing or adapting of foreign words usually involves a more or less conscious performance. The same may be said of variants formed from proper names or of words suggested by events, etc., at least when the principle of analogy is employed. Thus the word "bogus," meaning counterfeit or false, and once regarded as a slang word, has a somewhat peculiar origin. A man named Borghese, more than half a century ago, made himself notorious by drawing bills on fictitious banks. His name was commonly called Bogus, and his bills, as well as others of a similar character, were universally styled bogus currency. *Coco* is Spanish for bogie, and it is said the cocoanut was thus named from its resemblance to a distorted human face.

The word "silhouette" originated from the niggardliness of a French Minister of Finance named M. Silhouette (1709-67). Under his rule the meanest tricks were practised for the sake of economy, and the courtiers of Louis XV. had their portraits painted in black, with profile view, claiming that the policies of Étienne de Silhouette had left them so poor that they could not afford anything more costly. In Elizabethan times it was in hats that gentlemen found most scope for

the display of their taste. It was said that the block of a man's head altered faster than the felt maker could fit him, wherefore the English were called in scorn "Blockheads."

Many other historical examples of derivation might be given, but two or three more will suffice. In Greece votes were inscribed on oyster-shells (*ostraca*), and it was by these votes that an objectionable person might be banished from the country or "ostracized." To the practice of writing on wood is directly due the word "book" among the English. Both the Saxons and Danes used beechwood for the purpose, *boc* being the Saxon, and *bog* the Danish, name for it. We come by our word library and the French get their word *livre* for book in this way: the thin peel found in trees between the wood and bark was called *liber* by the Romans, and in time all their books, however written, were so named. Our word "volume" comes from *volumen*, the name given by the Romans to the substance which they rolled up as they wrote on it.

The development of family names is in itself an intensely interesting subject. Natural objects, desirable personal qualities, and even physical infirmities among the Romans, have supplied suggestions for given names and surnames. Various races and languages have recruited the common English names and patronymics. A large number of our family names have come from occupations and trades. Some of them define themselves, as Potter, Porter, Cooper, Chand-

ler, Butcher, Cook, Miller, Weaver, Draper, Tanner, Mason, Baker, Spinner, Smith, Carpenter, Sadler, Tailor, Gardener, and Farmer.

Others represent foreign tones. *Gow* is Irish, and *Gowan* is Scotch, for Smith. Backer, Baecker, and Becker are German. Baker, Boulanger, and Bullinger are French for the same. Still others preserve the old English suffixes, such as Webster for Weaver, Baxter for Bakester and Baker, Bagster for bagman, and Brewster for Brewer.

Many names of extinct trades have been transmitted—*e. g.*, Spicer, Palmer, Loriner, Harper, Heckler, Arkwright, Arrowsmith, Fletcher, Barker, Stover, Archer, Forester, Fowler, Falconer, and Venner. Mediæval offices and occupations are represented in Beadle, Bailey, Constable, Marshall, Burgess, Reeve, Sheriff, Elder, Priest, Monk, Bishop, Judge, Chevalier, Earl, Baron, Duke, Prince, King, Lord, Scrivener, Scribner, Castelan, and Castle.

Primitive family names were formed by adding the Saxon word *son* to the father's—*e. g.*, William, Williamson. The Irish prefix *O'* originally meant grandson, and may be found in many names such as O'Connor, O'Neal, O'Donnell, and O'Brien. The Scotch used *Mac*, as Macready and Macaulay; and this is often abridged, as in McNabb, McGregor, McAndrews. The old Norman prefix, *Fitz*, which signifies son, is shown in Fitzhugh, Fitzherbert, and Fitz-George. *Ben* in Arabic, *Sen* in Scandinavian, *kin* in Frisian, and

vitch in Russian are illustrated by Ben-Ezra, Eriessen, Watkin, and Ivanovitch. The Frisians were so tenacious of old customs that, until adopted by a decree of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1811, surnames among them were unusual. "Previously, a few of the old families had borne the names of their estates, but the given name was repeated over and over in families with slight variations in spelling" (E. F. Watrous).

The next step in the modernizing process was to combine son with the trade-name—*e. g.*, Smithson, McGowan, Fitzroy. This practice gave rise to such tautology as McAnderson, Fitz-Robinson, and McPherson. Names from places are relatively modern. The poorer classes adopted them without a connecting particle. But the wealthy used "*of*," or its equivalents, "*a*," "*ap*," "*de*," "*von*," "*van*," "*di*," "*da*," "*del*," "*du*," and "*do*." Instances are: "Carroll of Carrollton," "Ap-philips," "Delancy," "Von Glahn," "Van Antwerp," "Vanderhoven," etc.

The "late" gold discoveries at Cape Nome, in Alaska, gave prominence, in that region, to the word *tundra*, which is Russian and means low and marshy land. A well-informed Western man, who has investigated the matter, says: "Tundra differs from 'steppes' in this, that tundra is used to describe the low, flat, and ordinarily valueless land between two streams and is common along the coasts of Siberia and on the American side of the Behring Straits, all of which is tundra. Steppes originally meant a sandy

desert, but, by long custom, it has come to mean grassy plains as well."

From Hensleigh Wedgwood's book, *Some Disputed Etymologies*, is to be derived some interesting lore¹ about words. He says, for instance, that "bully"—a favorite term among small boys and used by them, as by Shakespeare, in the sense of excellent, as "O sweet bully Bottom," "bully knight," and "bully Sir John"—seems to be traced to the middle high German *buole*, a brother, spouse, dear friend, or something much beloved. From this it may be seen how first descriptive of boon companions, then of those who drank in taverns, and finally of those whose carousels and excesses made them brawlers, it came to mean, as a noun, a wrangling, intimidating fellow. It is worth while remembering that the word "filibuster," used so often in American politics, is a corruption of freebooter, introduced by the old English pirates.

"Cad," meaning one who excites contempt or disgust by his speech or actions, is related to the Lincolnshire word *cad*, which stands simply for carrion, a cad crow being a carrion crow. The Italian *carogna*, signifying both carrion and a

¹ The student is also referred to the following works, in which are answered hundreds of desiderata on this subject: Murray's Oxford Dictionary, vols. i.-iv., for the biography of hosts of neologisms; A. S. Palma, *Folk-Etymology*, London, 1882; T. L. O. Davies, *Supplementary English Glossary*, London, 1881; Barriere and Leland, *Dictionary of Slang*, 2 vols., London; J. Maitland, *American Slang Dictionary*, Chicago, 1881.

jade, and the Dutch *Schelm*, a carcass or a pestilent fellow, are analogues. Cad has nothing in common, except the sound, with the Scotch word *cadie* or *caddy*, now being popularized with the game of golf.

While breakfast has a perfectly obvious significance, luncheon and dinner, so far as their etymology is concerned, are shrouded in doubt. The Saxon infinitive *scencan*, to drink, gave rise to the substantive *skinker*, or one who pours out drink. In default of an equivalent term the German word *Kellner*, or cellarer, is used to a certain extent in the United States. From *scencan* are said to have descended both *nuncheon*, said of a drink set forth for workmen and others during the afternoon, and *luncheon*, usually meaning a simple meal. Just at present fashionable society uses, in the same sense, the word *snack*, signifying what can be snatched without any especial preparation. This term hails from England.

Now as to dinner: we know better what it means than what it is derived from. The first meal of the day, taken immediately after returning from mass, was known formerly as *disner* among the French. Students of language conjecture that it originated from the same source as *dejeuner*, or breakfast, namely in the Latin verb *jejunare*, to be hungry, from which we have the modern word "jeune," or starved, generally used metaphorically.

A negro on the witness-stand not long since

used the word *snitch* and was asked what it meant. This was his amusing reply: "Why, all the damage suit lawyers have snitches. A snitch is a fellow that watches for people to get hurt, and calls on 'em as soon as he can and makes a contract to sue the company for damages."

The recent "unpleasantness" in the Philippines gave some of our American volunteers a chance to study the native dialect. Newspaper correspondents have cited some of the pet words of the Filipino vernacular. Among them is *hiking*, applied to any swift and fatiguing travel; while a *hiker* is a man of nimble and enduring powers. "Cold feet" is an expression often heard in Manila. Its plain Anglo-Saxon synonym is cowardice. "Coffee coolers" were those who managed to get detached from their regiments in the field and assigned to more or less easy and much safer berths in Manila. A "coffee cooler" was supposed to be unable to swallow his boiling hot coffee on the morning of battle. A Filipino who followed the cause of the revolution was known as a *googoo*. "Chow-chow," meaning to eat, eating, or food, was a word brought to the Philippines by the Chinese, with their pidgin English. *Mex*, referring to the Mexican dollar, the former standard of money in these islands, is now typical Philippine slang.

A noun of strictly native invention is *bom-bom*. Native imitation would be perhaps the more accurate term. "A cannon," wrote H. Irving Hancock, "on being discharged, gives forth an angry roar

of 'bom!' In a second or two the shell explodes with a fainter 'bom!' Coupling cause and effect gave us bom-bom. If a native desires to explain that a big fight is on, he plaintively says, 'Mucho bom-bom.' " This reminds me of "*Et pom-pom-pom-Napoleon*," the refrain of a satirical ballad which privately went the rounds in France just after Bonaparte became emperor.

In connection with the recently besieged embassies in Peking came the word "legationers," and had the Chinese imbroglio continued, there doubtless would have been driven to our shores an immense immigration of strange words. One despatch from the scene of war stated that the "Chinese concealed on the banks of the Pei Ho are *sniping*." In the sense of guerilla warfare sniping is a veritable acquisition to a sound vocabulary, in the opinion of an inland editor.

The new words and phrases called forth by exciting events serve for a day, and to-morrow pass into the banal, the outworn, some of them perhaps to be revived under happier auspices. Now and then a phrase like Grover Cleveland's "innocuous desuetude" wins wide recognition and has the clinging qualities of a burdock. In truth, we constantly use phrases without a thought of their origin. We speak of the wife as "the better half" without knowing we are quoting no less a personage than Sir Philip Sidney; or we repeat something from Mrs. Grundy without suspecting that this garrulous dame her-

self was brought into existence by Thomas Morton, a playwright who lived until 1838.

The word "boycott" originated in this way: Lord Erne, an Irish land-owner, had for his agent Captain Boycott, of Lough Mask, Connemara, who treated the tenants with such severity that they petitioned for his removal. As Lord Erne ignored their complaints, they and their sympathizers retaliated in the autumn of 1880 by refusing to work for Boycott and preventing any one else from doing so. The agent would have been ruined had not certain Ulster men, protected by an armed force, come to his relief and husbanded the crops. Boycott, meaning "a combination that refuses to hold any relations, either public or private, business or social, with any person or persons on account of political or other differences," was first used by the Irish Land Leaguers, and the word thence passed into popular use.

London recently brought out the name "Hooliganism," to indicate the character and doings of bands of hoodlums that infest her streets and commit all kinds of misdemeanors. A similar class in New York a few years ago suggested the expression "gang rule."

We are almost daily threatened with words which, it is to be feared, the mightiest Thor of criticism cannot hurl back to their own sphere with a thunderbolt of discrimination, if they once get a popular headway. They are mainly freak verbs, which are always being formed out of proper names. Lieutenant Hobson's osculatory

exploits, after his indisputably brave act in sinking the *Merrimac*, inspired such monstrosities as *hobsonize*, *hobsonization*, etc. But as the thrilling occurrences and the popular heroes of them pass into history, most of these epithets are ostracized and disappear into the Valhalla of language.

The negroes of our Southern states are ever ready with impromptu expletives, and negro children are known to have a facility of expression and a gift for imitation far in excess of the children of the unlettered whites. Justly has it been said (D. F. St. Clair) that the negro got this linguistic gift from slavery. "The most of this class of whites were cut off from intimate intercourse with the dominant class, and in North Carolina and Tennessee fully a fourth of the white population is inherently illiterate."

But while the negro may have more of the gift of imitation and linguistic facility, he has not initiative and great patience; and if one will study the vernacular of the backwoods people, he will discover that they have originated ten words to the negro's one.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSCIOUS INVENTION OF WORDS.

By the simple method of transposition some patient person has worked out twenty-six different readings of one line from Gray's well-known *Elegy*—

The plowman homeward plods his weary way—

yet he claims the sense is not affected. Perhaps not to the casual eye; but any change of grammatical construction makes some intellectual difference of meaning, however trifling, for it brings the image or impression to the perception in a different form.

But a new word in a sentence usually affects its sense much more than could a mere transposition of old ones. And the first question an author who is tempted to perpetrate in print a word of his own should ask himself is this: Does it have "all the conditions of wordship"?—the quoted phrase being Richard Grant White's. The purpose here is to deal with words that are conscious inventions, and to use such illustrations as have come to the present writer's knowledge.

In a newspaper interview, not long ago, Rev.

R. S. Macarthur called attention to a new word which he thinks describes the condition of many men. The word is *miriagnostic*. "It is a word we greatly need," said Dr. Macarthur. "Many men are neither agnostics nor gnostics. In the early history of Christianity—in the third century, I think—there was a sect called 'Gnostics.' Professor Huxley gave us the word agnostic. He coined that word because he said that in a number of clubs to which he belonged the men used titles of various kinds, but he said that he himself was without 'a rag of a title,' and so he coined the word agnostic, as the opposite of 'gnostic' of the early Christian centuries. Joseph Cook reached the conclusion that we needed a new word, because, he said, many men were not agnostics, and neither did they claim to be gnostics. He asked the late Dr. McCosh if he could coin a word that would express the attitude of the large majority of men on religious topics. Dr. McCosh thought a moment and said, 'Let me rummage a little.' In the Greek lexicon he found the word *myrias*—numberless: and in the Latin, *mira*—wonders. 'Now,' he said, all you want to do is to add 'gnostic,' and they did so, and made *miriagnostic*: and that is one of the best additions to linguistic science that we have had in many a day. Now, as for myself, I am only a *miriagnostic*. I usually find that men who call themselves agnostics are nothing more nor less than *miriagnostics*."

Rev. Robert S. Macarthur, by the way, coined

the word *Messian*—one who believes in the Messiah—the Anointed One. It is not yet in the dictionaries, but he thinks it ought to be. He says the orthodox Jew is a *Messian*.

Rev. Anselm Kroll, of La Crosse, Wis., is sponsor for the word *eutrapelia* (directly from the Greek), meaning what Mr. Kipling calls clean mirth, a jest without a jeer, laughter without scorn, wit without malice, a joke without offense to one's neighbor. The learned clergyman has quoted many authorities to define and distinguish it. Some one has deduced the following bit of bantering philosophy: "What a lovely world it will be when its clever folk cease to strive to be satirical or sarcastic, and resolve to be *eutrapelous*."

The following examples are more exegetical and will give a clearer idea of what is meant by conscious invention than a whole volume of disquisition.

Professor J. H. Hyslop, who holds the chair of Logic at Columbia University, has coined a few words and invested one or two others with an entirely new meaning, so that it amounts to coinage.

First, he coined the word *conferentia* in logic, for the purpose of having a word to contrast with *differentia*, and to avoid the equivocal use of the term "genus." Conferentia he uses to denote the common qualities of any class of objects.

Second, he coined, so far as he knows, the term *contraversion*, as a better term for what is usually called contraposition in logic.

Third, the word *velleity* is an unusual word for the lowest kind of desire, but he adopted it from the Latin *Velleitas*, to denote that kind of freedom which is expressed by the idea of alternative choice, and in distinction to freedom as exemption from external restraint on the one hand, and freedom from mere causation without alternative choice, on the other.

Fourth, in his *Ethics* he coined the word *univ-olism*, to denote that theory of volition that denies alternative choice but does not make volition the effect of external causes.

Fifth, in his recent book on *Democracy* he coined the word *kakistocracy*, as the proper opposite of aristocracy, and intended it to express that view of politics opposing aristocracy, which meant unconsciously to defend the government by the worst classes instead of the best.

Professor Hyslop does not know of any other words that have been coined by himself, though he has several in his mind that he intends to coin in the publication of some future work.

Professor Simon N. Patten, of the University of Pennsylvania, invented a new word which appears on page 166 of his *Development of English Thought*. The word "introspection" has been in use for the knowledge of psychology we obtain by studying our own mental states, but there was no word to indicate the knowledge of psychic phenomena we obtain by observing others. Needing such a word, Professor Patten employed the word *altrospection*, to mean the knowledge of

psychology we can obtain by observing the impressions that excite other people to mental activity, as judged by their reactions against their impressions.

The work done by the committee of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations has made necessary new technical words. *Agronomy*, *zootechny*, and *agrotechny* are terms used to denote divisions of the general subject of agriculture. Agronomy covers the general subject of plant production ; zootechny, animal production ; and agrotechny, agricultural technology. The first two terms are adapted from the German ; the third is perhaps original with Mr. A. C. True, of the United States Department of Agriculture, and his colleagues.

But the most interesting process of conscious invention was furnished to me by Dr. Persifor Frazer, of Philadelphia, who is known to the world in the triumvirate capacity of geologist, chemist, and expert in disputed documents. In the *Bulletin of the Society of American Authors* for July and August, 1900, I published a letter inviting all members of the society to give me definite information as to their word-coinages. At the first note of this call Dr. Frazer stepped forward, somewhat regretful, but unabashed. He entirely agrees with most people as to the presumptuous atrocity of word-coining, the only excuse for which, he thinks, is the appearance of a new idea, simple or generic, without a name.

He assumes, at the outset, that I have no

objection to the introduction of a new word for an entirely new invention, such as that by which the human articulate speech may be conveyed for long distances over wire ; or even to a neologism like *Holoprocta apertura* (Cope) by the discoverer of the fossil remains of that interesting genus. He fancies that I may have in mind such inventions as *heterophemy*, of the late Richard Grant White, meaning the saying of something different from that which it was one's intention to say.

Seven years ago Dr. Frazer endeavored to sum up the results of studies relating to the general subject of documents which had occupied his leisure for many years. His belief was, and is, that this subject is susceptible of isolation from all others, and of reasonable classification into various parts. The general and subordinate ideas he wished to indicate were as follows : (A) The investigation of all the means by which thoughts are given permanent form and conveyed from one person to another. This, of course, excludes the temporary employment of the senses through a conventional use of successive sounds, signs, touches, tastes, or odors ; all of which are evanescent.

The general subject he wished to divide into : (A1) The chemical and physical characteristics of the materials and tools used in thus conveying thought ; (A2) the features in the formation of the symbols used which are distinctive, and the separation of them from any other—even similar—symbols ; (A3) the distinguishing features of

simulation, fraud, or forgery of the symbols mentioned in A2.

Now, to carry through a work on this plan when one is obliged to repeat all the preceding definitions, or use for the idea the empirical characters, A1, A2, etc., did not seem to Dr. Frazer desirable. After much deliberation, and with great reluctance, he determined to find an appropriate term for A, A2, and A3. A1 needed none. He received a number of answers from literary and scientific friends to his requests for counsel and guidance. It may as well be premised that "graphology" was inadmissible, because it had been preempted for the charlatantry of character-reading in hand-writing.

It will be noted that none of his correspondents quoted further on comprehended that his attempt was to arrive at a generalization. He pleads, in extenuation of his coined words, *bibliotics* for A; *grammapheny* for A2; and *plasso-pheny* for A3—the necessity that an algebraist has for representing a definite quantity by a letter. His publisher dared not print the real name of the book in his advertisement, but he is bolder now. The third edition came out recently. The second edition was printed in Paris, and the editor hid the real title away in diamond type in the preface.

Dr. Frazer submitted to several philological friends the following list of prepared words, from the Greek, merely to facilitate him in obtaining their opinions :

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>Grapho</i> —I write. | <i>Skopeo</i> —I look. |
| <i>Philosophia</i> —study. | <i>Phainomia</i> —(cause to) |
| <i>Anatome</i> —dissection. | appear. |
| <i>Eredna</i> —research. | <i>Plasso</i> —I feign. |
| <i>Mendo</i> —I reveal. | <i>Plasma</i> —forgery. ¹ |

The
demonstration
of the essence
of a
handwriting.

{ *Graphilosophy.*
Philosography.
Graphanatomy.
Erunography.
Graphoscopy.
Scopography.
Graphopheny.
Phenography.

Fraudulent handwriting— (*Plussography.*
 Forgery— (*Plasmography.*

Demonstration of fraud—*plussopheny.*

Revelation of forgery—*plassmenyma.*

Below are some of the answers received by Dr. Frazer, which I use with his kind permission; also that of Dr. Furness. The two other quoted correspondents are dead.

“222 WEST WASHINGTON SQUARE.

“DEAR FRAZER :

“I’ve broken both my head and my jaw over your problem, and my feeble conclusions are as follows :

“First, I have persuaded myself that *diplo-*
matics pretty nearly about covers your ground or
 can be made to cover it . . .

“Secondly, the main objection to any of these
 words in your list is their strangeness—and this

¹ Also foundation.

will vanish very soon after you have begun to use it, both to yourself and especially to your readers, who will be unconscious of the pangs which you have suffered in word-birth.

“Thirdly, in almost all these Greek words I would have the termination *ia*, so as to throw the accent as much as possible on the second word of the combination—*e. g.*, ‘Plassography’ would almost inevitably be pronounced ‘plassòg’raphy,’ and the ‘graphy’ would be obliterated, but would be retained in ‘plassogrà’phia.’ *Comprenez?*’

“Fourthly, the combinations with ‘plasso’ are so unusual, not to say far-fetched, that I would eschew its pedantic appearance, and, with a spirit of ‘russet yeas and honest kersey noes,’ would use no other than plain ‘forgery’ and ‘forgery-demonstration’ and ‘forgery-revelation.’ You’ll say they are uncouth, horrible. I’ll retort so’s the Greek—every whit as bad—even worse. I fall back on your getting used to anything.

“Your ‘graphology’ is this minute received. ’Tis no better nor worse than the rest. It really tells nothing to the uninstructed mind, *which must in any case wait for your definition.* There would be more likelihood, I think, of a general understanding of such a word as *graphopsychology* (which ain’t so bad), and *die Seele* is as good as *das Wesen*. There, dear lad, I’ve done my little all for you and my brain is as dry as ‘the remainder biscuit after a voyage.’

“Yours ever,

[Signed] “H. H. F.

"P. S.—My first and last word is: force *diplomacies* into your service."

To which Dr. Frazer adds: "The objection to Dr. Horace Howard Furness's advice is that *diplomacies* is already married."

Another letter (from the late Daniel G. Brinton) to Dr. Frazer:

2041 CHESTNUT ST., April 15, 1894.

"DEAR DR. FRAZER:

"After reflecting what I could add to the enclosed list with reference to forged or counterfeited writing, the most appropriate term which occurs to me is *pseudaleography*, from Greek, *pseudaleos*, 'counterfeit,' 'forged,' 'falsified.' We might consider *graphoplaxy* or *graphoplasur*, but these are less desirable. Taking the above then, a *pseudaleograph* would be the forged or imitated writing which is the object of your study, and an 'Essay on Pseudaleographs' is, as I understand it, the paper which you are preparing.

"Trusting the suggestion will not be wholly useless to you, I remain,

"Yours very truly,

[Signed] "D. G. BRINTON."

Here follow three short communications from the late E. D. Cope, the celebrated geologist:

"PHILADELPHIA, April 4, 1894.

"DEAR FRAZER:

"I still think that *plassophany* is as good a word as you can get, but here is another nearly like

the one you suggest. *Menysis* is, according to my lexicon, the word for which you give *menuma*; hence you can write *plassomenysis*, or short, for euphony, *plasmenysis*; *plassecephany* would be very exact. . . .

[Signed] "EDWARD D. COPE."

"PHILADELPHIA, April 4, 1894.

"DEAR FRAZER:

"*Congratulationes erumpunt! Hobscohlum elephandrino!* The word I wrote was *plassecephany*. If I wrote anything or now write anything contrary to the Postal Laws, please send this back and I will write a better one. *Your word is as good as your bond.* . . .

"E. D. C."

"PHILADELPHIA, April 6, 1894.

"DEAR FRAZER:

"The name proposed is good, provided you spell it with two s's—*plassphenology*. It is elliptical, as the full form would be *plassophenology*. I am not sure whether the omission of the *o* would be looked on with favor by a strict constructionist. I would put the 'o' in, as a matter of taste. Logy is of doubtful application in such a case. I prefer *plassophany*.

"E. D. C."

It should be conceded that Dr. Frazer has been quite frank with me, furnishing me ammunition to use against his act from our highly esteemed Shakespearean (Horace Howard Fur-

ness). But it is plainly to be seen from the foregoing letters that, though the erudite writers gave some very interesting suggestions, they misunderstood what Dr. Frazer wanted the words to express. No words were used by him but the three mentioned—to represent ideas A, A2, and A3; so that a part of the title-page of Dr. Frazer's book, printed according to his coinages, stands thus :

A MANUAL
OF THE
STUDY OF DOCUMENTS
(*Bibliotics*)
TO ESTABLISH THE INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER OF HANDWRITING
(*Grammapheny*)
INCLUDING
SEVERAL METHODS OF RESEARCH
(*Plassopheny*)
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V.

NEOLOGISMS BY LIVING AMERICAN AUTHORS.

THOUGH Edmund Clarence Stedman has invented several words, and in some cases given a new meaning, for the purposes of literature, to strictly scientific terms, yet at the moment of his writing to me on the subject he had a distinct recollection of only one of his coinages—viz., *lyronym*, an assumed name under which a poet may write. This occurs on page 100 of *Victorian Poets*—"A wide leap, indeed, from Matthew Arnold to 'Barry Cornwall,' under which familiar and musical lyronym Bryan Waller Proctor has had more singers of his songs than students of his graver pages."

Thomas Wentworth Higginson is not conscious of having produced more than one new word; that is the verb *to densen*. This was used in the form of the participle *densening*, in an essay called "April Days," appearing first in the *Atlantic Monthly*, April, 1861, and then reprinted in his *Outdoor Papers* (1863), where the passage appears (p. 238): "As the spring comes on and the densening outlines of the elm give daily a new design for a Grecian urn." It seemed to him

that there was previously no word to describe the steady filling out of the delicate outlines of an American elm in spring. He remembers writing an especial appeal to Mr. George Nicholls, then proof-reader of the *Atlantic*, and strongly opposed to all verbal irregularities; and he let the innovation pass.

Colonel Higginson does not justify this act, nor is he inclined to think that he would now do such a thing, but it then seemed to him justifiable. He knows of no other author who has used the word, though his sentence is quoted as authority for it in the *Century Dictionary*.

Thomas Dunn English, author of the world-famous song of "Ben Bolt," says he has always found that the number of words in our language was sufficient to supply his needs, except in one instance, where he did coin a word. That was *metropoliarchy*. His use of it was in an oration delivered on the Fourth of July, 1898, before the Mayor and Common Council of Newark, N. J., in which occurs the following sentence: "Now, under the mask of a republic, they [the French people] form a metropoliarchy governed by the *bourgeoisie*, who use the mob to erect or pull down dynasties, change or modify forms of government, and do what best suits their profit."

Ernest Ingersoll's word *quoted*, to designate a paragraph marked as quoted by the use of quotation marks, is a good one. His feeling is that you quote the man or the language or thought by the mere fact of giving it; but the act of using the

typographical signs “ ” is *quotating*, and such a paragraph is *quoted*. This, I believe, is a useful distinction. There ought to be also a single word to express the idea of a quotation within a quotation.

The only word Captain Alfred T. Mahan can be said to have coined is *sea power*, which is rather a phrase than a word. It was born of his preference for the English “sea” over the Latin adjective “maritime,” though he recognized the incongruity of marrying “sea” to the Latin word “power.” There was, however, no handy equivalent, and the Germans have been puzzled to find one in their tongue. Afterward Captain Mahan retained the expression because he thought its very roughness over “maritime power” would arrest and fix attention and so give vogue, at which he aimed. The result has justified the expedient.

He used once by chance the word *eventless*—“dull, weary, eventless month.” The word slipped without premeditation off his pen. He immediately thought it without authority and found it not in Worcester. Nevertheless he stuck to it. “Moneyless,” “shameless,” “heartless,” are its analogies, and its only recognized equivalent, *uneventful*, is a stupidity. First *full* is affixed and then *un* prefixed to neutralize it. *Eventless* strikes Captain Mahan as briefer, stronger, and much more significant. In speaking of eccentric—for military operations—he uses *excentric*, as the secondary meaning is now most common. He

doesn't know that he originated this, or, if he did not, where he got it.

Thus far the ordinary American language has been more than sufficient to let out the ideas of Professor Henry Van Dyke, according to his own deposition. He cannot remember inventing any words since babyhood ; and those which were coined in that overproductive period have gone out of use and out of memory. But stay : there was once a little river that could not be described by any other adjective than *water-fally*, and a bird whose song seemed to him *wild-flowerly*. The proof-reader objected to both of these words, but Dr. Van Dyke withstood him. Once he preached a sermon on *politethics*, as distinguished from "politics." He concludes : " But 'tis a rare subject, and the word stands small chance of living unless the thing becomes common."

I am indebted to Edgar Fawcett for some important suggestions. Though he has been living in London for several years, most of his books—in fact, nearly all—are stored away in New York. Therefore he could not refer to them, and therefore his account of his coinages is not so complete as it would have been had all his writings been accessible to him. And here I may say parenthetically that the plan of this book was determined chiefly by the fact that a surprisingly large number of the first books of our authors are out of print and not to be had for love or money. In these very volumes are buried many a verbal experiment which I am not rash enough

to affirm was the means of placing them on the shelves of oblivion. On the contrary, I am willing to believe that such tentative efforts were more or less valuable, but unappreciated. So in such cases the memory of the author is my mainstay. If he chooses to forget, as some authors do, all that was contained in their first books, there is slight hope of rescuing from limbo any of his youthful or earlier neologisms. But perhaps this is as it should be.

Mr. Fawcett says that our language is greatly in need of neologic stimulation; the greater number of immigrants the better, though there should certainly be a kind of philological Castle Garden or quarantine where they should be forced to wait until their health and respectability are both proved. Mr. Fawcett recently coined the phrase "to hermetize one's self," used, as you see, in the Greek middle sense; also *congenials* as a substantive, just as we use intimates. This fills a want, I should say. So does "viewpoint," now used often for point of view, though, unless he is very much mistaken, Mr. Fawcett was the first to employ it. In the same way he now employs *watchpoint*. He also recommends "guide," in the sense of aid—why not? "Help me with your guide," has a perfectly legitimate sound. "Guidance," though a euphonious word, is not a monosyllable, *and the language in monosyllables is almost pitiably poor*. Mr. Fawcett writes: "I think every writer ought to have on his conscience the coining of at least five good

ones (monosyllables) each year. Then, too, the word 'spirit'—to spirit a man—that is, to give him courage, zeal, etc.; also the verb *to fin*; 'watch how the fish fins the sea'—just as we say that a bird wings the air—another good monosyllable gained, I think; but I must pause here, for lack both of time and material."

Professor Richard Burton, who is in the English Chair at the University of Minnesota, says people accuse him of word-coinages, and generally he finds they are talking about existing words or those they are ignorant of. He believes, however, that in a few cases this may be true.

In his *Dog Literature* he speaks of *cynophiles* (dog-lovers), and doesn't find it in the dictionaries. In a paper on Robert Louis Stevenson, in his recently published volume of essays, *Literary Likings*, he speaks of Stevenson's having a "hang for spiritual things"—meaning a natural inclination or bias for them. This is a colloquial expression in New England, but I don't find it illustrated in the dictionaries, though it may be.

In this same work Professor Burton speaks of summer clouds *heading up* in a thunder-storm. This use of the verb to head up was familiar to him from boyhood, it being often used, both in oral speech and writing, by his father, the late Rev. D. N. J. Burton, of the Park Church, Hartford. It is different from the head-up of the dictionaries in the sense of "heading up"—i. e., closing up—of a barrel. It means rather

to "converge in" or "come to a culmination in." There is another example in *Literary Likings*. The author says: "Contemporary criticism proverbially walks in *Blind Man's Alley*." If that figure and phrase has ever been used before, he is unaware of it.

Though to *Helen's Babies* John Habberton owes his first fame as an author, he has since written much stronger and better books. Mr. Habberton says he has tried to recall some words that were really of his own making, but his trouble has been that every time he succeeded, as he supposed, in making an expressive word, some other man had thought out the same word—and a long time before Habberton. For instance, he used "asiotic," instead of asinine, and as a milder form of idiotic. It "caught on" nicely, but he is glad he did not preempt a claim to it, for he afterward found it had been in use for years in a New England family. Then, trying to differentiate small children of certain families, as regarded by their parents and by other people, he called them angels and *impgeles*—but, alas! a wise old physician had got ahead of him.

The contributions of Professor George Hempl, of the University of Michigan, in the way of new words are, as will be seen, somewhat technical. In most cases it is rather a new meaning than a new word out and out. Of the latter there are only *vivic*, *sonoric*, *sonorant*.

Vivic (pronounced vīv'ik): *Vivic* words are those that designate the more definite concepts—

that is, stand for objects (substantives), qualities (adjectives), or phenomena (verbs). They are contrasted with anemic words.

Anemic (pronounced ă-nēm'ik) : Anemic words are those that—(1) indicate the more or less vague relations (of position, time, quantity, etc.) existing between more definite concepts, and are thus conjunctions, prepositions, copulative verbs, auxiliary verbs, numerals, the indefinite article, etc.; or (2) simply refer to concepts that (*a*), as psychologic subjects, have become more or less vague in the mind, being personal, reflexive, relative, and weak demonstrative pronouns, relative and weak demonstrative adverbs, possessive and weak demonstrative adjectives, and the definite article, or (*b*) have not yet assumed definiteness, being indefinite and interrogative words. Anemic words are the opposite of vivic words.

Delta : The delta designates the pharynx, the mouth passage, and the nasal passages collectively. The German term is *Ansatzrohr*; there had thus far been no term in English, but Lloyd (*Journal of Anatomy and Physiology*, 31, p. 233) has since suggested *stoma*.

Transferred stress : The stress placed upon a new psychologic predicate when repeating a sentence that has not been understood or has been misunderstood. When one has said, "We were not *there*," and has been misunderstood, he may repeat and transfer the stress to the word not: "We were *not* there."

Displaced stress : The new stress employed in

repetition or in uttering phrases that are frequently used or readily anticipated, though there is no new psychologic predicate: "*I guess so*," for "*I guess so*"; "*I reckon so*," heard in the South, for "*I reckon so*"; "*after all*," for "*after all*"; "*excuse me*," for "*excuse me*."

Conglomeration: Conglomeration is the formation of a word by the growing together of words that chance often to stand in juxtaposition; for example, nevertheless.

Conglomerate: Formed by conglomeration.

Half-Gothic: A mediæval book hand that possesses some of the characteristics of the strict Gothic hand, but is more unconstrained.

Italian Half-Gothic: The handsome black form that the Italian minuscule had assumed by the end of the fourteenth century. A modern imitation of the early type is called "*Tudor Black*."

Sonoric (pronounced sō-nōr'ík): Sonoric syllables are such as are due to the prominence of sonority in one of their sounds. The German term is *Schallsilbe*.

Dynamic: Dynamic syllables are such as are due to new breath impulses. The German term is *Drucksilbe*.

Sonorant: Short for sonorous consonant—that is, a nasal or liquid.

Resonant: A term used to include vowels and the corresponding voiceless sounds sometimes paradoxically called "*voiceless vowels*."

For fuller information as to these words of

Professor Hempl's I refer the reader to his *German Orthography and Phonology*.

Charles Major recalls but one coined word of his own—*feminology* (bottom p. 18 of *When Knighthood was in Flower*). It may be defined as the science of the feminine—especially woman. Owing to the peculiar nature of the subject, this great science probably will never be brought within the category of the "exact"; but Mr. Major declares that he has, in his life, known many men who would profit greatly by a careful study of it. His belief is that if a man of brains thoroughly understands a woman, and has even a rudimentary knowledge of the underlying principles of feminology, he may live happily with her—and that, after all, is the great business of life.

Rev. Augustus H. Strong, of the Rochester Theological Seminary, is no coiner of words and could give me nothing original. But he expressed a wish to see the word "cussedness" in my list, and suggested that if I should write to E. Benjamin Andrews, Chancellor of the University of Nebraska, for his definition of the word *jasm*, I might secure a treasure. I did so, and Dr. Andrews sent me the following definition: "Pass a circular saw revolving five hundred times a second through a keg of tenpenny nails. That is *jasm*."

Charles Battell Loomis says his word-coinage mint never did a very rushing business. He is a believer in new words, if they are built up logically, and he likes to handle the bright, glistening

words of others; but, as before stated, there seems never to have been any occasion for night work at his particular mint, and the only word that he recalls having put into circulation was *irreluctant*, which won the indorsement of so nice a handler of words as Henry Austin Clapp, the Shakespearean scholar. The line in which it occurs was in some blank verse that appeared in the *Cosmopolitan*:

“And win therefrom the irreluctant check,”

is the quotation, he thinks, though he insists that he is never good at quoting. Anyway, *irreluctant*, in the sense of not reluctant, seems to me a good word and a word of pleasing sound, and stamping it with the date of 1900, Mr. Loomis bids it good speed. He warns me against counterfeit words. There are, he says, some very passable ones in circulation, but when they are discovered they will be withdrawn. The public will not be deceived long. Words that are built up illogically do not have the proper ring nor will they stand the acid of time.

Mrs. Caroline A. Mason is unable to recall more than two words worth mentioning for which she is responsible—viz.: *Broodle*, meaning to cud-dle and soothe a little child, and *fraternia*, as the name of a coöperative colony, like Mr. Howells' *Altruria*.

Professor W. G. Sumner says the only word which he has coined is *societology*. He coined this in an effort to get a concrete term for the

Science of Society, and to escape from the vagueness and ambiguity of sociology.

Clinton Scollard fears his adventures in word-coining are very few, if any. Indeed, at the time he replied to my letter he could not recall that he could claim to have fathered any word, unless it be to make an occasional noun into a verb, which is not, as he hints, entirely foreign to my purpose.

He remembers his use of *unurns* was once commented upon as unique, but it may be that the writer was mistaken in so characterizing it. The word occurs in the lines :

"The tiny king cup that upon the floor
Of emerald meads unurns its ample gold."
—*Masque of March.*

He has never come upon war-farer¹ in the dictionaries, but thinks very likely it has been used :

"And none of the bold war-farers, though
The flower of the land was there."
—*Tallefer the Trouvère.*

Mr. Scollard cannot place *moany*, save in

"So upon a morning moany—"
—*The Bells of Fossumbrone.*

yet he is sure others have written of "moany mornings," lured by the alliteration.

Edgar Saltus really cannot recall all his coinages. There are scores of them, though, for he always felt that an author has a right to give

¹ War-farer is in some dictionaries.

alms to the dictionary. But such as he has manufactured have always been made with a view to brevity. The most recent which he recalls are *monopolian* and *automobilically*, and he signs himself, "*Neologically Yours.*"

Gertrude Atherton believes she has been guilty of some coinages, but candidly doubts if they have enriched the English language. One of them is *littleist*, as a more exact description of the would-be realist. Another is *United Statesman*, in lieu of American—the latter being a descriptive term to which all North and South Americans have an equal right. Still another is *poluric*, in place of icy, cold. This word, however, may be found in some dictionaries. Mrs. Atherton recalls dubbing the "Theater of Arts and Letters," which had a brief existence in New York a few years ago, "The Home for Incurable Amateurs," but she rightly supposes that this is not quite germane.

Lloyd Mifflin kindly mailed to me a marked copy of his book of sonnets, *At the Gates of Song*, wherein, as well as in his other books, I find several pleasing and instructive examples. In verse one must avoid the startling and unusual in language, but Mifflin's dread that he has sinned in using a word here and there better omitted is more the result of a most refined sensitiveness than because there is any practical reason for such a dread. One often needs a new word to convey his idea in verse, and, finding the language furnishes none, he is then tempted to coin it.

“And in the honeysuckle *rasped* the wren.”

This line is from one of his sonnets, and the word *rasped* is here used to give the sense of harsh scolding which the wren sometimes indulges in.

“And from Apollyon’s form *malfulgence* dread
Fell on the hosts.”

The italicized word means a baleful light—a bad brightness.

“No lathe-turned limbs, the work of *jours*, has won
This eminence.”

The word *jours* in the sonnet “To the Sculptor of Ladro,” on page 44 in *At the Gates of Song*, is a localism. The masons often speak of a *jur*,¹ meaning an inferior workman, one who has not learned his trade. Probably it may have come from the French, a day laborer, unskilled. It is used in half contempt, and in such a sense Mifflin has ventured to use it. He confesses that he has never seen it written in verse.

Needing a caption for one of his sonnets,—in praise of the horse *Pherenicus*.—Mifflin coined the word *Hippopæan*, song in praise of a horse, one might say. This sonnet appears in his volume entitled *Selections from Bion, Moschus, and Bacchylides, Rendered into English Sonnets*, and the caption stands: *Pherenicus—a Hippopæan*. The poet is constrained to tell me that he is still in doubt whether to like it or not. Such a word is needed, however.

¹ Possibly a contraction of journeyman.

Another coined word of Mifflin's is used in a sonnet from one of the odes of Bacchylides—his "Fragment on Peace," and one of his most beautiful things. The usual translation from the Greek is "in handles of the shield," etc. Now this word handles does not give the idea of the shield's construction. A handle generally is a projection. Mifflin used the word *hand-holds*. This is from a localism current among workmen in Columbia, Pa., where the poet lives, and it is familiar in other places. They say: "Give me a han'-holt and I'll help you lift it"—that is, give me a place to catch hold of, not necessarily a projection, but used in case of a long log, *e. g.*, or a sack of wheat. To put such a coined word into the version of a Greek ode seems rather bold, but its appropriateness, I think, is proved by the fact that his manuscript passed through a very critical proof-reader's hands and without comment upon this word or compound. This is its justification. Such a word is needed. To say the "handles of a shield" is too preposterous; yet where is there a word for it? If hand-hold has been used in a literary way, Mifflin does not know of it. The lines in which the word occurs are as follows:

"In hand-holds of the shield, the spider lies
And weaves her web; spear-points that overcame
The warrior in the battle's red retreats,
And two-edged swords, all rust and rest from war."

A new word rouses many readers' ire, but it is less likely to do so when an adequate amount of

the context is given. Therefore it is but fair to all concerned to quote the whole line in which it occurs, as otherwise such words generally seem repellent. An expression little known, but a necessary one for the poet, is summer colt. Mifflin tells me an amusing story of one of the best proof-readers in America, a Yale man, I believe, who had no conception of the meaning of summer colt and thought it a colt born in the summer. Webster defines it as "the undulating state of the air near the surface of the ground when heated."

From a poem called "Syrinx and Pan" Mifflin makes this novel use of a word dear to Tennyson :

"When this keen nose, whose scent ne'er failed me
yet,
Sniffed in the *bosc* a Naiad," etc.

From *bocage*, Fr. ; or it might be bosk, from Gk. Boöky, bosket.

"And on the mullein's *tip-most* top
The thistle finch perched."

In this passage, from *The Slopes of Helicon and Other Poems*, the obvious sense is that of the bird being at the extremest point. Mifflin uses *aureole* as a verb, *fulgence* as a noun, "*fanged* my hand," said of an adder, *unthoughted* and *unniched*—i. e., unhonored. He also speaks of *faunian*—like a faun's nature. It might mean libidinous, in the sense of having no moral re-

sponsibility. A faun's nature was a step above a satyr's. In the lines,

"From the dim sea's unknowable *extreme*."

"Some peak unscalable of high *achieve*."

Mifflin has used words something in the manner in which Shakespeare used words. I mean the manner is his. To recapitulate a little: *Jours* (pronounced jurs) are unskilled day laborers who yet profess to know a trade. Wood-butcher is used contemptuously by skilled carpenters when they speak of a man who works at carpentering, but who has never learned the trade. Other people might call him a botch. But "jours" has not always this bad sense. It is sometimes said without opprobrious intention, being a local slang word in Columbia, Pa.

If all my correspondents had been as conscientious and explicit as Lloyd Mifflin, who has been likened to Landor, Matthew Arnold, and Shelley for the exquisite and noble perfection of his art, this collection would have been greatly enhanced as a treasure-trove.

CHAPTER VI.

NEOLOGISMS.—(*Continued.*)

THE only word the late Professor John Fiske remembered coining is a very technical one, namely, *deanthropomorphization*; which is duly defined in the Century Dictionary as follows: "The art of freeing from anthropomorphic attributes or conceptions—*e. g.*: 'There is one continuous process (of knowing) which (if I may be allowed to invent a rather formidable word in imitation of Coleridge) is best described as a continuous process of deanthropomorphization, or the stripping off of the anthropomorphic attributes with which primeval philosophy the unknown Power is manifested in phenomena.'"—J. Fiske, *Cosmic Philosophy*, i., 176.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich does not think he has ever invented a word, unless it is the word *crisping*, in these lines from a lyric called "Memory":

"The wind came briskly up this way,
Crisping the brook beside the road."

He may have used many words in an unconventional sense, but I refer the reader to his works for such instances. For centuries *crisp* has been

used as a verb. Spenser speaks of "her yellow locks crisped like golden wire." This is a line from Tennyson :

"To watch the crisping ripples on the beach."

And Maurice Hewlett, in his great romance, *Richard Yea and Nay*, has this phrase on page 251: "crisping and uncrisping her little hands."

W. J. Henderson, musical critic of the *New York Times*, thinks there should be a word to designate that part of a discussion or sermon or essay in which the propositions are made; and he is willing to father the word *propository*. It would give us an antithetic term to "expository." As it is, we are forced to use propositional, which is awkward at times. If we may say "expository," why not "propository"? It is legitimately derived and satisfies the demands of purity and precision in diction.

Henry E. Krehbiel, musical critic of the *New York Tribune*, says that though he may have indulged in the questionable privilege of coining words, it has never been done consciously and he could not make a list from his books if he tried. He remembers but one word of his own, and that he has used in lectures, but not in print—*isomodal*, as referring to the distribution of musical modes throughout the world. He fancies it is correctly made, but he does not aim at such things.

Another famous musical critic, James G. Huneker, once perpetrated vividly, an insane and

Lewis Carroll-like combination of "avidity" and "vivid," but he protests that this doesn't count, nor does it, in view of the fact that others have used the word and it is in the dictionaries. Mr. Huneker urged me to try his friend Vance Thompson, who "has a genius for verbal orchestrations."

I already had heard from Mr. Thompson. He says that every one is guilty of "coining" now and then. When one's thought does not fit into any of the familiar forms, it is quite natural that one should filch a matrix from the Greek, German, or French and make it serve. Probably he has done as much of this as any one—and he is not at all proud of it. He would be very sorry, indeed, to have his philological sins posted on the door of the Town Hall. The words that create themselves, as it were, and slip into the language are different. They deserve abundant welcome. There has been a tremendous influx of good, sound words from the ranches, the railways, the mines, the slums, but it would be hard to say who coined them. They are not English; they are not quite American; they are the raw stuff out of which the American language is being made. Thompson says he would gladly send me a list of the coinages for which he may be justly held guilty,—they might serve as horrible examples,—but none of them comes to his pen and the task of disinterring them is one to shudder at.

Vance Thompson is really a high priest of neology. "Every age," he says, "must curl its

metaphors afresh. Out of the old symbols the color fades day by day, and it is the poet's business to create new ones." Could I get at all his work and were I to repeat some of his improvisations in language I should forever be unshriven of the angels. He gives the world nothing that is slovenly or ramshackle, however. The chief of the United States Secret Service says that the best counterfeiters are always men of fine education, with technical skill to match their brains. This is usually true of verbal inventors, and is applicable to Thompson. In *French Portraits*, Thompson's pet word is "vagrom," though he did not evolve it. He also speaks of "*savor-some* French words," "He made *autolatry* a religion," and several times rouses "sib" from its long sleep in the dictionaries.

I must perforce refer in these chapters to certain authors who, though they may not have produced a new word, either have tried to do so or are not opposed to words simply because they are new. For instance, Donald G. Mitchell (Ik Marvel), though he recalls none of his "possible offenses" in the line of new coinage of words, does not doubt he has committed such—and would do so again, if only, without sacrifice of meaning, a short word were to supplant a long one, or a single word stand for a double one. Yet he has a large horror of these new coinages which spring from scholastic bounce or pedagogic conceit.

Robert J. Burdette has made a little study of

coined words himself, always with disappointing results. He says, after discovering them, he always runs across them somewhere about one hundred years before the birth of the inventor. He once coined a name, away back in 1876, for one of his humorous characters—Bilderback. He put the Bilderback family in jocose print for several years. One night, about 1887, he lectured in Salem, N. J., and told one of his Bilderback stories. The audience was convulsed with more mirth than the story called for. After the lecture he was introduced to about a dozen Bilderbacks, who enjoyed his story more than any one else.

F. Marion Crawford, in his delightful novellette, *A Rose of Yesterday*—isn't it?—puts the word *jukes* into the mouth of a boy, and says the lad never heard the word, and that it was what the Germans call a "nature word." But Burdette says it was an expletive of his when he was a boy—it was common enough in Illinois back in the fifties of the last century, and he used it in print twelve years ago in *Claymont Sketches*. Burdette's idea is that new words are invented or coined out of old material, but that it is a difficult thing to discover the inventor. He says, "the new word usually grows like Topsy," who claimed she never was born. All the genial humorist's efforts at coining words, he jauntily admits, have turned out to be merely bits of carpenter and joiner work. He fears his excellent memory has invented most of his new words.

John Burroughs reports that he has never coined a word, at least he does not recall one. He has found the existing vocabulary quite sufficient for his purpose. Several years ago he thought he had made a new word in "anthropocentric," man as the center, but found later that the word had been used by others.

Some years ago Rev. Josiah Strong made an exception to his life-long rule to avoid coining new words by evolving the word "expellent," which he used in *Our Country*, in the chapter on "Immigration." Having discussed the attractive influences of the United States, he turned to the expellent influences of Europe. The word did not appear in any dictionary which was at hand, and he supposed it was his own coinage—justified by the lack of any word to express his idea. He found it, however, included in the Century Dictionary, so that even this word affords no exception.

R. K. Munkittrick does not know that he ever coined a word—that is, invented one. But he has made such combinations as *grieflet*, to rhyme with *handkerchieflet*; also *soblet*, to rhyme with goblet and *corn-coblet*, and he once spoke of something or other, I have forgotten just what, as being the summer of our *disconcircustent*. He has called the Harpers' place "the Harperion Spring," and has sung of the time when the Houghtons will cease from Mifflin, etc. He once wrote a story called *The Harrishoffer*, in which he introduced such things as the *shampoodle*, the

kanga-rooster, the *ipecaetus* tree, the *vamoose*,¹ the *baked verbena*, the *redingote*, the *puccoon*, etc. Also in *A Day in Waxland*, the *wax dollphin*, the *wax tapir*, the *wax minster* palace, and so on, until the story comes to a *waxed end*. These stories are published by the Harpers in a book called *The Moon Prince and Other Nabobs*. The author mentions the *Cape Codger* and the *corifty whifty* in a book bearing the curious title, *The Slambangaree and Other Stories*, published by R. H. Russell.

James Whitcomb Riley coined what the small boy would call a "corker" in "The *Raggedy Man*." Other surprises of this kind may be found in Riley's dialect poems.

Mrs. M. K. Van Rensselaer avows that she has not contributed to the language any coined words. She did use *walking-side* for sidewalk, in the *Goede Vrouw*, because it was a family joke originating in some childish error, but she thinks it is hardly worth being erected into word-coinage.

It has always been the aim of Molly Elliot Seawell not to coin words in writing. Having had the advantages of a good early training in the English classics, she soon found out that there was a good plain English word for all the ideas she had or was likely to have, and she has made it her business to try and find out that word.

¹ This brings to mind Uncle Eben Holden's strange wild creature of the Northern woods, which he called the *swift*.

In writing dialect, though, as in her Virginia stories, this author has, in order to make it true to life, had her negroes coin words. As the reader knows, perhaps, the negroes, except the illiterate ones of the backwoods, are unique, if not admirable, word-coiners. They love to use long words, and they introduce a word wonderfully like the one they are after, and in the same sense, so that it conveys a perfectly good meaning. Mrs. Seawell hardly knows whether all the words she puts into the mouths of her negroes are of her own invention or recollections of her childhood on an old estate in Virginia. Some are her own—*reckelsome*, for reckless; *furgitious*, for forgetful; *discumfusin'*, for confusing, etc. These may be found in her novels, such as *Children of Destiny*, etc. In them she has strictly followed the negro manner of making the sense right, and the sound approximately so.

Miss Ruth Putnam thinks it may be that she does coin words in conversation—as, for instance, *insinuendo*, she believes she coined. But she would carefully weed out such individualities from printed works, as she does not think words should be treated lightly.

Professor Curtis Hidden Page scarcely imagines he has anything to contribute to my investigation, unless it be the term *closet-verse*, made on the model of “closet-drama.” He gives the following for what they may be worth: *soul-drama*, as a term to designate the highest form of psychologic drama, such as Browning’s; and *Helen*, the

world-beauty, possibly suggested by an unconscious thought of Goethe's treatment of Helen and so of the German compounds in *Welt*.

The veteran poet, Joel Benton, does not remember all his verbal coinages. He has the impression that he was the first person to use *hypethral* in the sense (adjectively) of out-of-doors, as hypethral writings. Soon after doing so he found Lowell doing the same thing. Benton also has spoken of *dendral* growths—meaning woody growths. Lately he used the word *poethood*—"in his early poethood," as one might say "in his early priesthood."

In reference to hypethral and dendral, Benton asked Richard Grant White what he thought of them. The latter said: "Dendral, whether in the dictionaries or not, is all right. I shouldn't hesitate a moment about using it. As to hypethral, in the sense named, I must think a while."

But Benton never saw the eminent scholar afterward. And what Lowell *did* seems to Benton as authoritative as what White might have *thought*. Probably most poets would accept dendral without a murmur of dissent.

Professor Henry A. Beers affirms that there are no serious word-coinages in his published works. On page 192 of his *Ways of Yale* he proposed the adjective *gemmy* (from *The Gem*, Phila., 1842), as descriptive of the style of the old annuals. On page 36 of the same book he ventures the noun *chumlock*; for the relations of

college chums or room-mates, on the analogy of wedlock.

On page 174 of the same book he uses the word *sphinxxy*—dealing in riddles, which is, so far as he knows, original. Somewhere he has employed a verb of his own invention—*troll*—to ride on a trolley car, but I cannot refer to the passage.

In his *Suburban Pastoral*, page 3, Professor Beers uses the expression “nepotic suggestions,” of a man who looks as if he had a number of uncles. Webster gives nepotic, though with a different meaning. These are all playful suggestions, not seriously proposed mintages. Adjectives such as *sandal-woody* and *tube-rosey*, for an Oriental-looking young woman; or “Tulkinghorny existence,” from Lawyer Tulkinghorn, in Dickens’ *Bleak House*, the professor has frequently hit upon for the nonce; but their employment is too special for extended connections.

In his day Rupert Hughes has coined numerous words—that is, he has lifted them from the Greek and Latin to our language; but the fact that he can remember scarcely any of them shows, he argues, how little weight they must have had. He had no time to hunt for any and could remember only three: *anecdoteage*, of the reminiscence period of old age (he would not swear that it is original with him); *dialectophobia* and *dialectophobes*, of the enmity and enemies to the use of dialect, and *viceversation*, a pedantic form of topsy-turvyism. Hughes insists that these are

merely whimsical and of no earthly use. He asks if I have seen C. C. Converse's word *thon* in the Standard Dictionary. Yes, and there's a useful coinage! Here is the definition:

"A pronoun of the third person, common gender, a contracted and solidified form of *that one*, proposed in 1858 as a substitute in cases where the use of a restrictive pronoun involves either inaccuracy or obscurity, or its non-employment necessitates awkward repetition. Examples: 'If Harry or his wife comes, I will be on hand to meet *thon*' (*i. e.*, that one who comes). 'Each pupil must learn *thon's* lesson (*i. e.*, his or her own).'"

The only word to which Mrs. Theodosia Pickering Garrison lays the slightest claim in the matter of coinage is *infurled*, and her only reason for supposing it to be a new word, or rather a combination of old ones, is because she is unable to find it in the dictionaries she has at hand. She uses it in some verses entitled a "Ballade of Books," in the following sense:

"Let it be worth great sums or naught,
In paper bound, or calf infurled."

Alfred Ayres, so far as he can discover, has used four words not found in the dictionaries, and they are: *tonist*, *precisionist*, *slap-dasher*, and *swosh*.

Marion Harland recalls but two words coined by herself. One, which has passed into general

use, is *betweenities*—denoting the gaps between stated tasks which may be utilized by the economical housewife. The other, *chivy*, was freely applied during the Civil War to an indefinable reckless slouch of appearance and manner characteristic of so-called chivalric, original secessionists.

Rev. Charles Frederick Goss, author of *The Redemption of David Corson*, once published a little volume called *The Philopolist*, or city-lover, a word of Dr. Goss' coinage. This is the single word he has coined in all his life, and he believes it will have a mission. Some such word seemed to be needed to express the growing consciousness of our relationship to the city of our birth or adoption. He writes: "I shall be very happy and grateful to have you incorporate it in your volume and thus give it a wider circulation."

Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart has made only an occasional playful turn by which a word has gained a sort of freshness, or accent, perhaps, such as *unpretty* for not pretty, *altitudinous* for altitudinal; unless so light a thing as *procrastinative*, meaning the slow, always procrastinating native, otherwise the tinkering mountaineer, be included.

William O. Stoddard, the beloved writer of books for juvenile readers, to the very suggestion of word-coinage answers, no, sir! but with a sly twinkle in his eye; and a liberal pinch of salt (Attic preferred) should be taken with his remark that he wishes to be considered as resenting the

implied imputation, and that he would not be guilty of such a thing. He will not drag me into a dispute by saying that there are too many words already and that neither he nor I can know them all as it is, let alone piling on more.

In Stoddard's own words: "Those ridiculous monsters, the dictionaries, make a nefarious living out of the existing pernicious overplus of verbiage. Every hundred-foot skeleton they dig up is a word-breeder. So are what they call the sciences and the newly invented stars. Greek has become a bankrupt *nomenclatologicalistic* mine. So is the shattered tongue of the ancient Romans, if such a people ever did really exist, which I doubt. I hate Cæsar, anyway, for having been the first to set agoing the practice of European *touristing*. He did France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, etc., and came to grief among the British watering-places. I'm glad he did, and that they killed him for it when he came home to blow about his tour. I wish you all success in your undertaking, but in my opinion the list of new-born words you speak of are but as Chinese children—only a few of them are worth keeping. You may drown the others."

Edward Everett Hale would have said off-hand that he had never made up any words, but his wife told him *he had made up a good many*. There are more than a million words of all sorts in the standard edition of his works. He called George III. a Brummagem Louis XIV., "but," he avers, "Brummagem is no word."

Dr. Hale's opinion is offset by the dictionaries, which give *brummagem* both as a noun and an adjective. The word bears evidence of being a corruption of Birmingham. As a noun, it means one of the cheap imitations made at Birmingham; hence an imitation—*sham*. As an adjective, in usage, it means cheap and showy; spurious; bogus; specially made at Birmingham, England. In a book called *The Art of Conversation*, "*brummagen*" should have been "*brummagem*."

Dr. Hale was on Funk and Wagnall's Committee of Revision when they made the Standard Dictionary. His duty, with the others, was to decide as to new words. He writes: "I condemned 95 per cent. of those submitted by the workmen on the dictionary. But the firm wanted to put in all the words they could. So they put in all we condemned—with some sort of printer's mark which meant, 'condemned by the committee of revision.'" Dr. Hale thinks one might make a good list of new words by going over this dictionary and noting the words so condemned.

A Harvard professor relates to me a diverting anecdote, which goes to show that the making of dictionaries is not altogether free from queer processes of induction. About ten years ago the professor sent to a New York firm then compiling a new dictionary the word *repolonization* (in reference to Poland), which had been used by one of his friends. He received the following reply:

"You sent to us a word for our new diction-

ary. The word is not to be found in any book in the Astor Library. In what sense do you use it? I derive it from the following : prefix *re* : *pola*, *πολος*, a pole, and *νίζω*. I wash—to rewash the poles of an electric battery.”

This etymology, however, was not published.

CHAPTER VII.

NEOLOGISMS.—(*Continued.*)

It might be supposed that in the Southland, where nature is prodigal with her perfumes and colors, where people express themselves with warmth and enthusiasm, many new words would spring into existence. But in this respect the tendencies are rather conservative than otherwise. Those are old Southern principles, sah, Southern principles! Yet the Southern writers have done their share, not only in naturalizing foreign words, particularly from the French, but in handing down autochthonous verbal forms.

In order to facilitate my research and correspondence among Louisiana authors I enlisted the coöperation of my friend, Miss Helen Pitkin, of New Orleans, formerly the editor of the Woman's Department of the *Times-Democrat* in that historic city. Miss Pitkin, *en passant*, is one of the noted beauties of the South, and among her kinsfolk of the past were those two widely different personalities, Lord Byron and Margaret Fuller. Her own work, both in poetry and prose, bespeaks rare gifts of mind and is redolent with the charm of a beautiful soul.

Like marble melting into mist

is a line from one of her poems which will haunt my mind forever.

Professor William B. Smith, of Tulane University, has made a few real additions—not mere ghost-words—to the English language. Such are *homeoidal* (included in the Standard Dictionary), like-shaped, like-constituted throughout; said of any geometrical extent any part of which may be moved (or thought as moved) freely in any way, without any distortion, throughout the whole. For example, a straight line, a circle, a plane, a sphere-surface, our Euclidian Space—all are homeoidal.

Homeoidality,—the German *zusammen-hängend*, usually rendered connected,—said of a surface or higher spatial extent, to indicate how, in what degree, it hangs together—how many cross-cuts may be made from point to point of its border without its falling into two distinct pieces.

Compendence, compendency—property of being compendent.

Elbert Hubbard, the presiding genius of the Roycroft Shop at East Aurora, N. Y., is straightforward about the matter. He says that beyond a doubt he has coined about 400 words. He has kept no track of them and made no note of them, however, and to hunt them up would take about a month's steady reading. Here is one of his words: *Romeikitis*, the habit of reading newspaper clippings about yourself; obviously sug-

gested by the surname of Henry Romeike, the founder of the first newspaper-cutting bureau.

When that intellectual Nimrod, Louis M. Elshemus, fails to find in the Black Forest of literature verbal game that satisfies his mental taste, he bags it on his own preserves, so to speak. Elshemus, who is a record-breaking sonneteer as well as a successful painter, had what he calls the "grievous fault" to coin words when he was younger. On publishing his writings these verbal novelties were tabooed, as by that time he had become aware that it is best to use pure simple English.

However, a few words which he left as they were coined by him are in his published volumes. One of them is *fulmant*. This he contracted from "fulminant," in order to have a word which would express better what he wished to depict; also for euphony's sake. It appears in his *Lady Vere and Other Narratives*—viz.:

"Then Ralph stared out o'er bay
And distant banks of cloud, fulmant in foam,
Trembling aslow, like Arctic bears aplay
Upon some floe in turquoise stretch of sea."

The crisp elisions and frugal economies of expression in the foregoing extract are quite characteristic of Elshemus and are not unlike some of Bloodgood H. Cutter's immensely aboriginal lines. Desiring a word to give the peculiar state of the aforementioned cloud-banks on a June day, Elshemus sought in vain for an Anglo-Saxon root

that would be harmonious with the word "foam," which he was obliged to preserve as the most important word—since to the poet those cloud-banks seemed to send up foam out of their bulk. Therefore the Latin word for thunder was resorted to, and he invented a verb from *fulmen* to suit his purpose. Also *fulmant'*, with the accent on the last syllable, is intentional, so as to give the slow, tumbling movement of those clouds adequate expression.

According to Elshemus, if any one watches such cloud-banks with their foam-crests, and listens long enough, he will hear in his mind's ear a faint thunder, "which, of course, is caused by the imagination." However, he says, this is easily accounted for, "since the foam above the clouds seems to be puffed upward as though like the clouds above, an explosion of powder." This is too deep for me, but I hope it is clear to the reader.

The following are "actual creations" of Elshemus's. While listening to birds he tries to invent a word to express the manner of their singing. In the volume previously quoted, in a sonnet, "The Nighthawk," two verbs appear which convey as clearly as is possible to the author the way the male and the female exchange thoughts:

" . . . Then flies the nighthawk high,
With eyes intent on prey in nooks and trees;
While shrill *crebeaking* as he wheels at ease,
His mate joins! When they meet, *puylute* they
cry—

Then o'er the dusk-tinged trees they wing around,
While wood-birds flute and sing with heavenly
sound ! ”

Another is in his “Songs of Spring”—viz. :

“The red-black marsh-bird, sweet *bree-reeing*
In joy, then swaying—swiftly fleeing.”

Again, in the same volume :

“The rippling *triller-triller* chirp . . .”—

this of a bird, hid in the leafy trees, he could not see. He might have other examples in his manuscript of past years, but as he has written so much, his memory fails to recall more. How these analytic morsels would delight Sainte-Beuve, were he living, or Edgar Allen Poe, who, along these lines, might think it worth while to embellish his essay on “The Philosophy of Poetry” !

Ah, but Frances Aymar Matthews could not remember all her own coinages, nor was there a book of hers in the house. To coin words has ever been an impulse with her, when she could not think immediately of just what she wanted, as also to coin aphorisms, mottoes, headlines, etc. So my request struck a friendly chord.

The very first word Miss Matthews can remember inventing is the word *dependable*, when she was about fourteen or fifteen, for its use in, if she remembers aright, a story. The New York *Evening Post* (again, if she is not mistaken) took her to task for both invention and use ; so did a number of other papers, reviewers, and lit-

erary people ; but she still finds it representing just what she needed and has often seen it used since. In writing of *Jane Eyre* she has said : "Almost every woman novelist since the appearance of that book by 'Currer Bell' has been *Brontëized* by its marvelous influence."

She has used the word episodic (as have others), finding it stronger and better than the three or four words necessary in its stead. In her play, "Aaron Burr," the hero says : "Even so, sir. It is not untrue that when a woman has locked and bolted, even barred, the door against the one who knocks outside, she still will hie her to the window to perceive if he *tardies* on the steps." Tardies seemed to Miss Matthews to express exactly the situation, which neither lingering, nor tarrying, nor stopping conveys. In some essay of hers is to be found, "the *defeminization* of women is almost surely succeeded by the *effeminization* of men," or, as she wrote it in French, "*Plus les femmes se defeminisent, plus les hommes se feminissent.*" This, I believe, crossed the Atlantic and has appeared in various places in French print. The *deviator* is a word she coined to portray, in a single term, if possible, a certain type of man, not criminal, sinner, nor culprit, but yet one who deviated ; perhaps not without his attractions, but lacking in the Anglo-Saxon stability. The man in question was a Latin.

In her play, "Joan D'Arc," Nicholas l'Oysel-eur, the villain of history and play both, says of Joan : "Aye, and she doth *royal* it here in camp,

as 'twere a court and she the queen of it." In an essay Miss Matthews recalls this: "*Innocentism* is a cloak not infrequently employed by the most *Rusée* woman." And in a paper on Admiral Dewey she says: "Between sunrise and high noon the man of Manila *deprovincialized* the most provincial country on the globe," etc. I should not cry, "hold, enough!" to the pleasing causeries of the author, but her memory will not help her further.

Professor L. H. Bailey, who has the chair of Agriculture at Cornell, sent me a list of new words which he has made in his various publications. These include:

Cuttage—the practice or process of multiplying plants by means of cuttings, or the state or condition of being propagated. Equivalent to the French *bouturage*.

Graftage—the process or operation of grafting or budding, or the state or condition of being grafted or budded. Equivalent to the French *greffage*.

Layerage—the operation or process of making a layer, or the state or condition of being layered. Equivalent to the French *marcottage*.

Seedage—the process or operation of propagating by seeds or spores, or the state or condition of being propagated by seeds or spores.

Inter-tillage.—This term Professor Bailey proposed in a foot-note on page 69 of Roberts' *Fertility of the Land*, as follows: "Intercultural tillage is a term proposed by Sturtevant to designate till-

age between plants in distinction to that which is performed only when the ground is bare of plants (as in sowed crops). . . . As tillage is a better word than culture to designate the stirring of the land, inter-tillage has been used in this book to designate tillage between the plants—that is, ordinary cultivating, hoeing, and the like.”

Three new words were proposed in his *Survival of the Unlike*, and are defined as follows :

Centrogenesis—a term to designate the rotate or peripheral type of form assumed by members of the plant creation.

Dipleurogenesis—a term proposed to designate the two-sided or dimeric type of form assumed by the members of the animal creation.

Pseud-annual—(that is false annual) a herbageous plant which carries itself over winter (or the inactive season) by means of bulbs, tubers, and the like.

Landscape-horticulture—the operations and manual appliances employed in embellishing grounds—the industrial phase of landscape-gardening.

Other coinages from Bailey's *Survival of the Unlike* are :

Communal intensity—an expression to designate the fact of the rapid spread of insects and fungi consequent upon the greater number and extent of host-plants.

Cultural degeneracy—used to denote the common assumption that plants become weakened in constitution or virility by cultivation.

Varietal difference—a formula to express the fact that unlike constitutions may be characteristic of horticultural varieties.

Plur-annual—a plant which is annual only because it is killed by the closing of the season (as by frost); in distinction to one which dies at the close of the season because of natural ripeness or maturity. This word has been used by French writers, but was first used in English, so far as I can learn, by Professor Bailey.

I see that "olericulture" is in the Century and the Standard Dictionary. It was made by the late Dr. E. Louis Sturtevant. He also made nuciculture (nut culture), but I have not been able to find out when or where. "Bush-fruits" might be mentioned. It has been long in use in England, but was introduced into American writing by Professor Bailey in his *Principles of Fruit Growing*. Professor Card has written a book on *Bush Fruits*, comprising small fruits excepting the strawberry. "Stercology" was invented by Dr. M. M. Rodgers, in *Genesee Farmer*, August, 1847, and used in his *Scientific Agriculture*, 1848. It is the science of enriching the soil. It has never been used by any other author, I believe, but Professor Bailey is tempted to take it up, he says. "Offscape" was used by landscape-gardening writers in England a century ago. Professor Bailey is now using it to designate that part of the landscape which lies beyond one's own area.

Ingersoll Lockwood, a New York philologist,

has been for several years collecting newly coined words, with the intention of publishing a list some day. He has about 1500, he tells me, but they are from all languages, picked up here and there. In some cases he may have the author. Several are his own coining; and many were coined at his request by learned friends. His scheme is as follows:

1. He collects words that are coined to piece out our language, as *to precise*, to state a thing with precision.

2. He collects words which serve to remedy a defect in our language—*e. g.*, lip-lazy,¹ a disinclination to put thoughts into words.

3. He collects from other languages words which tend to add strength to ours, sometimes taking them as they stand; sometimes slightly changing the spelling, abolishing the accents, and pronouncing the word more *Angliorum*—*e. g.*, “lèse-majeste” (pronounced lees-majesty); “trocha,” a line of defenses subdividing a country; “full-throated,” with unhampered inclinations, from the French *à pleine gorge*, as “She gave full-throated utterance to her thoughts.”

4. He builds useful words from the Latin or Greek, as *auto-drome*, a motor truck; *auto-typed*, said of a letter written on a type-writer by the sender himself; that is, not dictated; *logolog*, a word made up of several words, as Devil-may-care, a never-to-be-forgotten look, etc.

5. He deems a word unknown to the language

¹ Found in the dictionaries.

if not found included in the latest editions of the Standard Dictionary. But he has very few new words by Americans. To quote from one of his letters: "Englishmen are the great word-makers, and good ones they make, too. They surge up against a blank wall in the language and forthwith build a ladder to clamber over. You can't suppress them. They are thinkers; we—no! We are plunged into a slough of vanity thickened with love of lucre. Your American authors, for the most part, are not authors, but merely relationists (see p. 157). Any fool can write a story, but put thought into it—*hic labor, hoc opus est.*"

It may be inferred from this that Ingersoll Lockwood is a man of robust opinions, and I may add that he is quite as distinguished and Titanic in mind as in person. His brother, Colonel Henry C. Lockwood, who received the surrender of Fort Fisher, and who, up to the time of his illness, a few years ago, was a prominent member of the New York bar, has written much, chiefly on politics and history. He doubts if he ever coined any words in his two principal works. In *The Abolition of the Presidency* he did incorporate coined words in use with us. For example, the word *claneocracy*, and he was rapped over the knuckles by the London *Spectator* for using so mongrel an expression—half English, half Greek. In his *Constitutional History of France* he used "disgruntled" and "plebisitary," then in no dictionary that he knew of. His adjective for

plebiscite he had never heard. It may be found in dictionaries of more recent date.

In writing his *France*, Colonel Lockwood had several disputes about words with his publisher. It was insisted that he should write plebiscit, or plebisitum, instead of plebiscite, because the last could not be found in the English dictionaries. He prevailed after a struggle. Then came the same contest over a long list of words which he wanted to print without italics, as if they were English words. Some of them, at least, appear now in the public press as he has them in his *France*—viz. :

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------|
| Proletariat. | Faubourg. | Cure. |
| Dossier. | Quartier. | Intendant. |
| Bourgeoisie. | Octroi. | Salon. |
| Petite Noblesse. | Canton. | Bordereau. |
| Commune. | Coulisse-ier. | |

All these words had a technical meaning, and could be only clumsily translated. Colonel Lockwood writes: "It may not be within the scope of your inquiry, but you would be surprised possibly at the number of English words which have recently passed into French. The Germans are trying to force out French words from their language. *Macmillan's* for December (1898) has an article entitled, 'The Madness of Mr. Kipling.' It is claimed that he has bred a kind of collector mania, a craving for strange¹ words.

¹Says Brander Matthews: "Mr. Kipling's earliest tales are some of them almost incomprehensible to readers

If he discovers a new term—a technical term for choice—he is happy as any entomologist with a new beetle and as eager to exploit it. This pedantry of technical terms seems to grow on him, and the craze for symbolism.”

I wrote to Archibald Lampman, the Canadian poet, not knowing of his death, which had occurred a few days before. Duncan Campbell Scott, himself a distinguished poet and the editor of Lampman’s collected works, kindly answered the letter, and his reply is in its way valuable testimony. Mr. Scott writes: “Mr. Lampman was careful in his use of language, and, as I have said, I cannot recall any inventions of his. . . . I might draw your attention to the word *clarid*, which appears in one of my own poems—meaning clear, and formed in the same way as fervid. I do not recall any others now, but I have used a good many words partially obsolete which are full of color and which are highly expressive. A few might be mentioned: sowage, pomace, braird, quern, undern, crecive, antres, aura, alula.”

Though some of her English friends have objected to her use of certain words (in things she has written) as not being in the dictionary, Elizabeth Robins has never failed to lay the blame on the dictionary and to insist that the words were “good American.” It is true, her countrymen may not uphold her here, but in that case it is to them I would have to apply.

unacquainted with the vocabulary of the competition wallah.”

Frederick Jesup Stimson remembers no word of his own invention in his published works, though there may be some. He used the word "savour" in the sense of an active verb, "to taste slowly and with gusto," which was criticized by Professor Hill, of Harvard, but is found in that sense in the larger dictionaries. There are also many archaic words at the beginning of *King Noanett*, and possibly all through that book, belonging to natural objects, some of which have passed out of use except locally, and some of which were always local to Devonshire, Virginia, or Massachusetts.

Professor George Trumbull Ladd has never indulged himself much in attempts at making new words. He thinks, however, that he was the first to use the word *sermonette* (twenty or more years ago); and he was among the first to use the words *ideate* and *ideatia* and the adjective "affective" as the correlate of intellectual and voluntary, for the total feeling aspect of consciousness.

The examples of Ernest Thompson Seton's verbal experiments thus far are as follows:

"I took pleasure in the *shatterment* of that theory, and flew in and out among the *twiggery*"—that is, corral of shrubbery.

"*Thrillful* of interest"—from *The Trail of the Sandhill Stag*.

"He laid the rifle down *revulsed*."

"*Hunter-brute*."

Robert Burns Wilson does not think he has

been much of a word-coiner, though sometimes tempted in that direction. He used the word *unimpressioned* in "The Shadows of the Trees"—title poem in his latest volume of verse; also the word *murth*, in the sense of a rich overgrowth, is perhaps unusual. It occurs in a poem, "On San Juan Hill," published in the New York *Sun*:

"The tufted murth of the patient earth
And the mystery of the trees."

He recalls nothing more, unless it be the word *brit*, which he has used in an unpublished poem:

"Far from the brit and jungles of the world"—

meaning grating harshness. The word is in the dictionaries as the name of a small fish, but fishes suffer from all sorts of names that may, or may not, mean something.

A few days after Mark Twain's return from a long absence abroad (October, 1900) he wrote me that he was too rushed to make a very coherent reply to my inquiries. So far as he could remember then he has coined no words that have achieved the distinction of incorporation into the English language. He thinks he may have given currency to some that were already in use, particularly in the Western mines, but of this he is not sure.

I think it is safe to say that Mark Twain has not only popularized words and phrases which

might have died but for his tonic treatment of them, but has coined others which have become familiar, at least in our vernacular. The same may be said of Bret Harte. The one favorite word with him seems to me to be the old stand-by "perfunctory." This he uses on high days and holidays, but it is, to be sure, good English, with an ancient enough ancestry. The "newcomers" he immortalizes in the direct discourse of his characters.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEOLOGISMS.—(*Continued.*)

MR. C. W. ERNST says he has been thought, erroneously, to have introduced the word “intern,” meaning to confine, especially a prisoner. When he used the word in 1877 it was not new, as the Oxford Dictionary shows. Mr. Ernst thinks words are not apt to be coined save when fitted or adapted to a new contrivance, thing, notion. Even the term elevator, called lift in England, came after we had the thing, and the first passenger elevator was that in the American House, Boston, 1866.

Mr. Ernst is by no means wrong in thinking that we have hardly made a beginning in the study of the language we speak. Yet that language shows better what we are than do all our historians combined. “Yesterday,” writes Mr. Ernst, “I wasted time in running down two words: ‘Wild-cat’ banking, occasioned by a Michigan statute, and used in the United States Senate by Benton in 1838; *bubble* is the fashionable slang for riding in an automobile. I marvel that people do not gather the speech of the multitude. I am amazed that no American ever produced a dictionary of place names.”

As might have been expected, Boston, one of the cradles of American culture, "the Hub of the universe," "the modern Athens," and so on, has given to the world numerous words. Mr. Ernst has made an exhaustive list of them. On the subject of "Words Coined in Boston" he read two papers before the Bostonian Society, one in May, 1896, the other in May, 1899. To give the gist of his interesting discoveries may prove a pardonable digression. From these addresses I learn that the earliest printed instance of the term "selectmen" probably occurs in the Boston Records of March 4 and 28, 1642.

This author has it that the Tudor period of Boston English was Boston's golden age in everything; while the best coinages of the eighteenth century refer to traffic, finance, and politics. He finds the word *coaster* to be apparently the earliest Americanism. In state documents of 1633 it is used "in the sense of idler, grouping the coaster with tobacco-takers and fowlers. The word now denotes sliding down-hill, and is used by all bicycle riders."

"Sleigh," plainly due to Dutch influence, was in use a hundred years ago, but whether it got into the American vocabulary by way of Plymouth or New York has not been clearly determined. The term is said to occur in a New York law of 1699, while Mr. Ernst's earliest citations are Sewell in 1703, and Madame Knight in 1704.

The word "rum," first used in the Massachu-

setts Records of May 6, 1657, has become universal. It may be the old gypsy word, brought to Boston "by the university men, and popularly applied to the 'strong water' the Boston men made of West India material, the home supply of corn being limited. A true Boston word, now a good Americanism, is 'lumber.'"

That the real-estate term "lot" originated in Boston is not clear, but the Town Records of 1636 show that "lot" is an abbreviation of allotment. The word "schooner" was born in Gloucester, but Boston gave "packet" its American meaning. The fact that Boston always excelled in leather and leather workers may be the reason, says Mr. Ernst, why Boston forestalled other towns in applying the word "harness" to almost any kind of horse tackling. "Phaeton" also looks like a Boston coinage. It appeared in the *Boston Gazette* of May 26, 1760. The Boston word "express," originally local, and denoting a systematic package service, has become a true Americanism. The term came up in 1840; the service itself, about a century ago.

Boston invented paper money in 1690, and fifty years later William Douglass was writing about "depreciating" and "fluctuating" values and "promoters" of bubbles. "The popular word for paper money was 'currency,' duly entered as an American coinage in Johnson's Dictionary of 1775, and unduly neglected by our own lexicographers." The financial agitation of Boston also brought forth the term caucus, de-

rived from calkers. Adopted as a political word about 1760, it has become a part of the English language wherever spoken. A few years later the word electioneering was common, but it may have come from England. Obviously American is "unconstitutional," meaning illegal or not binding. "It occurs, with unconstitutionality, in a report submitted to the Boston Town Meeting on December 27, 1782, but may be found earlier." Another Boston coinage is immigrant, and its story is told in the preface to Jeremy Belknap's *History of New Hampshire*, vol. iii., dated April 23, 1792. "It was an immigrant," says Ernst, "the identical Jean Baptiste Julien that did not invent julienne soup, who introduced here the word 'restorator,' on July 12, 1793, which remains as a sporadic folk-word, while society patronizes restaurants."

Advice and consent, we are told, is much more than a phrase; for it denotes a great political principle, reinforcing the new meaning given to the word "commonwealth" in America, and running like a golden thread through our national history. It is found in the Boston Town Records as early as 1636, and "the men with whom we associate the delightful and telling phrase are John Adams, Increase Mather, and the great John Winthrop." In Winthrop's journal, November 28, 1635, the word boss was used in the following way: "Here arrived a small Norsey (North Sea) bark, of twenty-five tons, sent by the Lords Say, etc., with one Gardner, an expert en-

gineer or work boss, and provisions of all sorts, to begin a fort at the mouth of the Connecticut." This word comes from the Dutch, and Winthrop probably had heard it from some of his Puritan brethren who had lived in Holland. Americans now have a proper horror of it in its political sense.

"Help, meaning household or outside assistance hired in all sorts of ways, occurs as early as 1645 in the Massachusetts Records. The term was needed to discriminate between mere servants, who were not free, and the free person who sold time or talent for a consideration. . . . The term occurs in the Town Records of 1747, and is apt to be misunderstood until one knows the precise meaning of service and apprentice prior to the Revolution. Servant was synonymous with slave; help meant a person with full civil and social rights."

Boston also gave to mankind "store," and by 1753 the term had passed into the statutes, with a meaning distinct from "shop." In 1751 the *Boston Evening Post* advertised "a large assortment of brass kettles." Ten years prior the term had been sortment. A prototype of the much talked about New York commuter of to-day lived in Boston one hundred years ago. When turn-pikes became popular in Massachusetts, it was customary to commute tolls, and the modern commutation ticket is merely a modified survival of stage-coach days. The farm wagon originated in Pennsylvania; so did the prairie schooner. (Per-

haps the reader is familiar with Thomas Buchanan Read's poem, "The Waggoner of the Alleghanies.")

The word "factory," denoting an establishment for the wholesale manufacture of goods, was in use a number of years before the outbreak of the Revolution. "Democrat, as an American party name, did not originate in Boston. It was started 4 July, 1793, at Philadelphia, by Citizen Genet, and was for years a term of reproach. Jefferson disliked it. Yet the name stuck, and Boston led in accepting it. We had a newspaper called the *Democrat*, which first appeared 4 January, 1804."

Ernst ventures to hold that tannery and bindery are Boston coinages. "Bindery appears to be due to Isaiah Thomas, who used it in 1810. He would be apt to coin the term, which has gone hence, not only to England, but to Germany as well. Sugary is a good Americanism (place for boiling maple-sugar), and we might coin *printery*, *bookery*, on the precedent of butchery, fishery, tannery, hatchery, snuggery, and the London Yankery."

To the best of Ernst's knowledge and belief the following are Boston words: Real estate as a business term (it is a law term in England); team, meaning horse and wagon; teamster; "corder, about 1655, meaning an officer that measured wood for fuel, and long extinct; dockage. 1673, recalling the fact, generally forgotten, that Boston had a dock system before London";

fireward, 1711, still in use, and denoting "the fire police rather than the firemen who work the engines ; blanks, in the sense of blank forms" (1724) ; transients, said of persons accommodated in hotels (about 1709) ; block, "denoting a group of houses or stores," became common at the beginning of the nineteenth century ; limbs, applied to both legs and arms, a term well chosen to denote four extremities with one word (1738) ; goodies, used by Mrs. Mecom in a letter (1766) ; dressmaker, in 1810 or earlier, and abutter, "a true Boston term, familiar to real-estate dealers.

. . . In assessing taxes Boston officials always used their 'will and doom,' and in due course coined the verb, which is still in use. Hence the dooming-board. The word doom is sometimes associated with gloom, but is simply a variation of the word deem, and means opinion or judgment. When taxable property is not reported to the assessors, they exercise their doom or judgment."

It is claimed that Mr. Louis Prang, an honored Bostonian, coined the word *chromo* in 1864. Another distinctly Boston gift to our vernacular is the telephone call, *hello*, which came in 1878, and has gone all over the world. The late C. E. Pratt, member of the Common Council of Boston, in 1879, proposed *bicycler*, objecting to the English bicyclist, which he put alongside of walkist, etc. "The term was immediately accepted, and is interesting for the reason that its origin is a matter of record."

And, finally, there is Boston brown bread. Here Ernst gets really eloquent. He exclaims: "I know very well what brown bread in England meant. Shakespeare knew brown bread; he did not know *our* brown bread." It appears that permission was granted Nathaniel Thwing—he had been at Louisberg and was familiarly called Major—"to sell a six-penny loaf of his brown bread, weighing eleven ounces, provided it did not contain exceeding 'one-fifth part Indian meal.'" This was probably in January, 1747. Boston brown bread originated in his bakery, which was in or near Post Office Square. The standard was changed in 1764, and the mixture was allowed to contain not exceeding 50 per cent. of Indian meal. Our amiable author remarks: "It is safe to keep January —, 1747, as the birthday of Boston brown bread, and to believe that we added so much to our national diet and dictionary."

Another beloved comestible, Boston baked beans, is not mentioned by the authority I have quoted so profusely. But the *New York Sun*, one of the most flourishing of our American word-mints, in a funny leading article on "The Science of Beans," has provided some new nomenclature for them. Thus: "A *cyamologist* or *cyamologer* is a man versed in *cyamology*, which is the science of beans. Take one Greek bean, *kyamos*, and the Greek *logia*, a speaking, and you have *cyamology*, a speaking concerning beans. Take *cyamology* and graft on the 'ist' or 'er' to express the

agent, and you have cyamologist or cyamologer. Cyamology is a member of the old familiar 'logia' or 'logy' clan, and denotes a justly venerated branch of science." After quoting imaginary authorities for the use of these, the "editorial" mentions *cyamomystical* and *cyamomystics* as rare (they are, rather) and adds this facetious trio :

Cyamophilist—"fond of beans; a lover of beans."

Cyamophagist—"a bean eater, a native of Boston, U. S. A."

Cyamophagy—"the eating of beans."

I am not sure that many of the suggestions in this book have not more psychologic than philologic value. Certain it is that a marvelous advance will be made during this century in the study of psychology in all its relations. On this point Professor Elmer Gates has contributed a memorable opinion :

"Men trained in the art of more skilfully using or utilizing the mental functions will, in at least one institution already founded, devote their lives to scientific research in such a way as to achieve a greater number of discoveries than would be possible to minds that are not thus psychologically trained. It is the mind that must make all discoveries and inventions, and more and more, as the century grows older, will investigators be specially trained in the art of applying the mental processes to the development of special sciences and arts. Hitherto the direct training of the

mind factor of making discoveries has been almost totally neglected ; investigators have gone on blindly and haphazardly, violating almost every environmental, bodily, and psychologic condition of success. Hereafter these conditions will be scientifically regulated, and men who have devoted years to the attainment of special kinds of intellectual, emotional, and conative skill will carry on systematic lines of investigation for the sake of ascertaining the truth. This factor is applicable, of course, not only to electricity, but to all sciences ; nevertheless electricity is the first scientific department organized on this plan. Mentators who have learned how to carry on the intellective processes of imaging, conceptuating, idealizing, thinking, reasoning, and introspecting with greater ease, accuracy, and at a greatly augmented speed, and who have at their command all the proved data of a science and all needed experimental facilities, will be able to make more numerous discoveries and inventions than otherwise."

Many people are becoming deeply absorbed in mental and psychical science, and for this reason I give the terms invented and proposed by that remarkable English investigator, the late F. W. H. Myers, one of the founders and perhaps the strongest pillar of the Society for Psychical Research.

In 1882 Mr. Myers first suggested the terms *telepathy* and *telesthesia*, and it has become possible to discriminate between these two words

somewhat more sharply now than formerly. "Telepathy may still be defined as 'the communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another, independently of the recognized channels of sense.' The distance between agent and percipient which the derivation of the word 'feeling at a distance' implies need, in fact, only be such that no known operation of the senses can bridge it. Telepathy may thus exist between two men in the same room as truly as between one man in England and another in Australia, or between one still living on earth and another man long since departed. Telæsthesia—perception at a distance—may conveniently be interpreted in a similar way, as implying any direct sensation or perception of objects or conditions independently of the recognized channels of sense, and also under such circumstances that no known mind external to the percipient's can be suggested as the source of the knowledge thus gained."

"*Telergy*—a name for a hypothetical force or mode of action, concerned with the conveyance of telepathic impressions, and perhaps with other supernormal operation.

"*Supernormal*—of a faculty or phenomenon which goes beyond the level of ordinary experience, in the direction of evolution, or as pertaining to a transcendental world. The word *supernatural* is open to grave objections; it assumes that there is something outside nature, and it has become associated with arbitrary interference with law. Now, there is no reason to suppose

that the psychical phenomena with which we deal are less a part of nature or less subject to fixed and definite law than any other phenomena. Some of them appear to indicate a higher evolutionary level than the mass of men have yet attained, and some of them appear to be governed by laws of such a kind that they may hold good in a transcendental world as in the world of sense. In either case they are above the norm of man rather than outside his nature.

“*Cosmopathic*—open to the access of supernatural knowledge or emotion, apparently from the transcendental world, but whose precise source we have no means of defining.

“*Dextro-cerebral* (opposed to *sinistro-cerebral*, also a coinage of Mr. Myers’)—of left-handed persons, as employing preferentially the right hemisphere of the brain.

“*Entencephalic*—On the analogy of entoptic; of sensations, etc., which have their origin within the brain, not in the external world.

“*Panmnnesia*—would imply a potential recollection of all impressions.

“*Hyperpromethia*—Supernormal power of foresight; attributed to the subliminal self as a hypothesis by which to explain premonitions without assuming either that the future scene is shown to the percipient by any mind external to his own, or that circumstances which we regard as future are in any sense already existent.”

To illusions accompanying the departure of sleep, as when a dream-figure persists for a few

moments into waking life, he has given the name *hypnopompic*.

“*Methectic*—Of communications between one stratum of man’s intelligence and another; as when he writes messages whose origin is in his own subliminal self. Some word is needed to express this novel conception; and Plato’s use of *μεθεξῆς*, participation (Parm. 132 D), suggests ‘methectic’ as the most appropriate term of Greek origin.

“*Preversion*—a tendency to characteristics assumed to lie at a further point of the evolutionary progress of a species than has yet been reached; opposed to reversion.

“*Promnesia*—The paradoxical sensation of recollecting a scene which is only now occurring for the first time; the sense of the *dejà vu*. The term *paramnesia*, which is sometimes given to this sensation, should, I think, cover all forms of erroneous memory, and cannot without confusion be used to express specifically this one anomalous sensation.

“*Retrocognition*—knowledge of the past, supernormally acquired.”

Finally he suggested the word *panesthesia*, “to express the undifferentiated sensory capacity of the supposed primal germ.”

In his glossary Mr. Myers explains some words and phrases in themselves not new, but used in the studies of the society with some special significance. They are too numerous, however, even to summarize here.

Dr. James Braid, a Scotchman by birth, but for many years a surgeon in Manchester, England, was the rediscoverer of the subjective origin of hypnotic phenomena, and invented a terminology which is closely followed, with two or three exceptions, at the present day. Among these terms are :

Neurypnology, the *rationale* or doctrine of nervous sleep.

Neuro-hypnotism, or nervous sleep, a peculiar condition of the nervous system produced by artificial contrivance.

Then, suppressing the prefix "neuro," for the sake of brevity, Dr. Braid evolved such terms as *hypnotic*, *hypnotize*, *hypnotism*, *dehypnotize*, etc., which have superseded largely in popular and almost wholly in scientific usage the terms "mesmeric sleep" and "mesmerism," originated by Friedrich Anton Mesmer.

Other terms, like *mono-ideology*, *monoideism*, *psycho-physiology*, etc., invented by Dr. Braid, have not fared so well. Indeed, his enterprise in this direction was prejudicial to his career. Except by a curious and withal skeptical public, nearly all his theories were ignored during his lifetime, his death occurring in 1860; but his terms—that is to say, some of them—were gradually adopted and his researches recognized, though in no such degree as they deserve to be or will be some day.

To return to our less abstruse American authors: Octave Thanet, in a short story, uses the

colloquial term *pernicketty*, which I take to mean a fussy kind of worriment.

The mountain of Frederick Remington's mind labored and brought forth the compound "*bulldogged*"—of a man's hands gripping a carbine barrel.

Sarah Guernsey Bradley's clever pen is responsible for this: "the *weirdities* of this naughty world."

Professor Burton makes laud a noun,—“worthy of laud,”—as it was used in Elizabethan times, and I am glad to see it given this twist again.

But I despair of being able to mention all the “fresh arrivals.” They are coming in on new trains of thought almost daily. I doubt not that while this tome is in press a dozen or more new terms will be hatched which I shall wish were included here.

CHAPTER IX.

NEOLOGISMS.—(*Continued.*)

PROFESSOR THOMAS J. ALLEN advocates the adoption of such a means of improving our language as will give future generations the benefit of the united efforts of the best living authorities on language, and he would gladly support any movement that might lead toward that end. If the expression be allowed, he favors respectable counterfeiting, in the hope that it may lead to the establishment of a mint. But he is not a counterfeiter. He knows that we need more word-currency, but he does not wish to assume the responsibility of coining. He is averse to "free and unlimited coinage." He believes in a single standard—constituted authority.

Edward Payson Jackson made a rather neat word in *Filipina*, to designate a Filipino woman.

Dr. Van Dyke, in *Fisherman's Luck*, devotes a light and airy chapter to the subject of *Talkability*.

Professor John Duncan Quackenbos, in *Hypnotism in Mental and Moral Culture*, introduces a fearsome word denoting a parlous thing. It is *opsomania*, which, alas ! works its ravages among

the young and fair. It gives them "indigestion, mental indolence, chronic gastric catarrh, and, most to be deplored, a fetid breath, which renders the possessor positively odious." "The breath of a healthy girl of twenty," moralizes Professor Quackenbos, "should be pure and sweet as a May breeze," but opsomania "transforms it into a nauseous blast." In his review of the book William S. Walsh comments in these words on this fashionable malady: "It is the commonest of all complaints among the girls of the period. The girls themselves call it a sweet tooth, or, rather, a sweet tooth is that form of the complaint which mostly attacks the girls. In a general way Dr. Quackenbos defines opsomania as a mania for articles of food, particularly delicatessen and confectionery. He treats opsomania precisely as he would treat dipsomania (the drink habit), or morphinomania (the morphine habit), or the cigarette habit, which has so far escaped the adventitious horror of being christened by any portentous Latin name."

Max O'Rell says: "Thanks to the tact, the brilliancy, and the high intellectual attainments of American women, one can *causer* in America, and the vocabulary of the language used in the United States ought to be richer by one word, a good equivalent for this French verb which must be imperfectly translated by 'to talk' or 'to chat'; for *causer* means to chat with wit, humor, brilliancy, and great refinement."

In a sermon, Rev. George F. Pentecost used

the word *togetherness*, as of Christians in worship.

A friend of mine, a literary woman, wrote me in this playful vein: "I am getting *copyosis*, a mental disease, caused by trying to adopt the style of such as I am familiar with, in order to have a little diversity."

Mrs. Mary L. D. Ferris coined the word *loanor*, one who loans; but she says she has been rebuked for so doing and is sorry. To me it seems quite as eligible as many other words formed with that suffix.

Kate Jordan Vermilye is sorry, too, but because she cannot mention having coined a word. She did want to use the word *whetherying* to express the doubtful murmur or questioning sound of the sea, but it was not permitted by the publisher. This word is already in existence, though with a different meaning from that proposed by Mrs. Vermilye.

Isabel Gordon Curtis, the editor of *Good House-keeping*, writes: "I should like to contribute one late addition to your newly coined words, only it comes from an uneducated little newsboy instead of a famous writer. The youngster was waking the early Sunday slumbers of our neighborhood by a cry: '*Hur-r-r-ruld, Wur-r-ld, Sun, Jour-r-r-nul*, all the New Yor-r-rk Sunday pa-per-r-rs.' 'Bring me a *Herald*,' shouted the man across the street. 'Haven't got one,' cried the youngster. 'I've got all the rest. D'ye want one of 'em?' 'No, I don't. I want the *Herald*. You've just

been hollering *Herald*.' 'Well, 'twas a *misholler*, I guess. I'm all out of *Heralds*.' *Misholler* is not a bad word at all."

Caroline K. Duer, describing a game of polo, in one of her scherzo stories has this phrase: "Men were shouting and ponies' quick little feet *thud-thudding*."

A certain writer who is not ashamed to bring to market his own verbal produce uses this italicized word in one of his rococo musical criticisms: "One might call him Professor, but it would *ambiguify* his dignity with that of hypnotists, chiropodists, barbers, and other wearers of the word." Needless to say, this is stodgy, if not faulty.

There have been suggested a number of words which fastidious philologists insist are more elegant and concise than "horseless carriage." It is hoped that something more appropriate and less of a mouthful than automobile will be devised.

The heteroclitic and gauche word *ergograph* sounds rather funny when literally translated, as "thereforegraph." It is a machine invented by Professor A. Mosso, of Italy, for the purpose of determining the stored-up nervous energy of school-children.

A resident of Brooklyn, over the initials S. B. K., recently addressed a communication to the *New York Times*, of the following import: "When a married gentleman at home says casually that he is pleased with his new typewriter,

his wife is a little curious to know the grammatical gender of the new article—whether it be feminine or neuter, she or it. I think if the *Times* will lead in calling the instrument a *typograph*, the operator a *typographer*, and the product of the operation, for which there is no single word, a *typogram*, this nomenclature would be adopted. This is not a bad suggestion; for it meets an awkward deficiency in our language.

It is a good sign to see such writers as Sir Robert Hart using “dict” in place of dictum, as we may say “hest” instead of behest. The more superfluous syllables we get rid of, without the slightest injury to the meaning, the better it will be for our loggy language.

Brander Matthews can only say that to the best of his recollection and intention he has never invented a new word; but that he is not very violently opposed to decent neologisms is attested by the quotation (on p. 37) from one of his articles in *The Bookman*.

Mere declaimers, though they may imply a prejudice against neologism, are not necessarily *ex parte* arguments against word-coinage. Professor Charles E. Norton is not aware that he has ever coined a word. With rare insight he observes that words deliberately coined are seldom of worth, except as mere names, and have no life of their own. The words which live are rarely the conscious creation of any man.

The effort of Thomas Nelson Page has been not so much to invent new words, as to put into his

books the words which, though unusual in our cities at present, are in current use in the old part of Virginia. He is convinced that these words are good old English, and they serve the double purpose of showing the origin of the life he describes and of expressing his ideas very vigorously.

Elizabeth P. Train regrets that it is not her good fortune to be possessed of sufficient originality to supplement any existing need in our language by words of her own coinage.

General Charles King begs leave to say that to the best of his knowledge and belief he never coined any more words than he has money. There is a chance here for a waggish query, but I refrain.

Lilian Bell, author of *The Instinct of Stepfatherhood*, etc., cannot discover that she ever coined a word in anything she has written. She is quite satisfied to use "the few feeble words of English" at her tongue's end, but to group old words in such a way that her phrases will stick in peoples' minds and the words will seem new. Had I asked her for coined phrases, she might have told me that, so far as she knows, the terms, now passed into current use, of *glossy-girl*, *girl-bachelor*, *man under thirty-five*, and the like, were original with her. But she never coins words.

Professor Barret Wendell really does not know whether he ever coined a word or not. If so, he says the fact is not to his credit. The language affords full scope for any ideas he ever had.

Hamilton W. Mabie, while very much interested in my endeavor to make a collection of word-coinages, fears he never had either the originality or the audacity to coin words, and he recalls no such coinages in his books.

William Dean Howells states that if he has coined any words, he knows not what or where they are. How about *Altruria*, Mr. Howells? (See p. 260.)

Richard Henry Stoddard declares that if he has ever coined a word, he has forgotten that felony against our good old mother tongue, which has more tokens than he has any occasion to circulate. He does not think he could "shove the queer" if he wanted to. Honest money or none for him.

George W. Cable seems to be in doubt. He has no idea how many word-coinages he has made, nor what they are, nor in what circumstances they originated.

Henry James is afraid he is wholly unable to aid me in collecting words either of his own invention or of any one's else. He has attempted to write only in a language already existing, and has found *that* a literary task abundantly, and superabundantly, difficult by itself. Complicated further by extemporized and imported substances, it would, he fancies, have got the better of him altogether. In short, he has never had anything to say to which some word or other already forming a part of human speech has not had to his sense something to contribute of its own.

Frank R. Stockton does not remember that any words of his invention have appeared in his works. Certainly he *hopes* that this is the case.

It seems to F. Marion Crawford that a book on word-coinage should be at once interesting to the public and useful to writers. Nevertheless he fails to see how to answer my questions. He has always tried to avoid coining words in his writings, while seeking old ones in all good authors, in the hope of finding useful expressions having good authority. If any one will point out to him his word-coinages, he will be glad to help me—and himself—with any explanation or excuse he can find.

Edward S. Van Zile has never been fortunate enough to add a new word to our language. Our tongue, destined to subdue all tongues, has not suffered, he remarks, from his inability to add to its riches. After all, do library-made words ever come into the world in possession of the germ of immortality, asks Mr. Van Zile, and he continues: "If I were searching for New Anglo-Saxon words I'd go to the street urchin, not to the professional writer. It is not the overeducated oyster that begets the pearl."

Bliss Perry, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, has tried to discover some of his word-coinages for my benefit, but without success. Perhaps some years spent in teaching rhetoric makes one quite too shy of neologisms.

Professor George E. Woodberry cannot say that he regrets not having any words of his own

coinage to send me ; but so far as he knows there is none.

William H. Rideing believes he can acquit himself of transgressions of this kind, having found a normal vocabulary sufficient for his needs, but the subject, he admits, is an interesting one.

The negro poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, modestly assures me that he would not dare to take any liberties with the English language. In dialect—well, they all say that is a different thing, and so it is in many a volume.

Kate Douglass Wiggin says she has a particularly bad memory, but she does not think she ever coined a word in her life.

Professor Charles H. Moore believes he has not invented any words ; though he should have no objection to word-coinage if a purpose could be served better so than otherwise.

General Lew Wallace has no recollection of coining any word. Daniel G. Gilman, late President of Johns Hopkins University, has no word to father, and President Eliot, of Harvard, most emphatically pleads "not guilty."

Mrs. Amelia E. Barr advised me to compile a list of Anglo-Saxon words and let neologisms go to grass. But several manuals of Anglo-Saxon serve very well.

Mrs. M. E. W. Sherwood has never to her knowledge coined a word. She has found our noble English tongue copious enough.

J. W. De Forest wished he could help me, but remembered no word-coinages of his own. He

had but two of his works within reach, and they seemed to be without noticeable linguistic novelties.

Vida D. Scudder is not aware, so far as her memory serves her, of having coined any words that appear in her published works.

It would be impossible for F. Hopkinson Smith to send a list of his word-coinages without more research than he could give to it. And even if he had the time to make such a search, he might not find a single worthy example.

Theodore Roosevelt has no knowledge of any word-coinages of his own. He is sure he remembers none.

Mrs. Burton Harrison really has no idea that she ever attempted to coin a word. She has been, always, an ardent disciple of English undefiled, and any possible lapses from it have been her misfortune, not her fault. She is kind enough to add that she will look with interest for the results of my research.

Margaret Deland doubts if she can lay claim to the production of a new word. So far as she can recall she has not coined any word which would express any particular idea of her own. She thinks a book upon this subject would be immensely interesting and of great philologic value.

In what little he has written for publication Professor Lewis E. Gates has tried not to do any counterfeiting. He has contented himself with the current coin of the realm of letters.

Never having been consciously a coiner of words,

the late Charles Dudley Warner did not see how he could help me in my inquiry.

Lilian Whiting does not believe she ever coined a word, but adds, "I wish I had." This phrase is strictly feminine and simply delicious.

Goldwin Smith, of Toronto, Canada, is not conscious that he has invented any new words; but one sometimes does it unintentionally, as by coining a verb from some already existing noun, or by turning an adjective like brusque into a verb—brusqued, etc.

Charles G. D. Roberts doubtless has coined some words in his time, but if so, he does not remember the "delinquency." He is not at all sure that a search through all his books would reveal enough of them to be worthy the scantiest paragraph. For so small a return, he is sure, I would not condemn him to such a familiarity with his own works as this would entail. Seriously, if he were at all given to word-coinage,—which he is not, being rather a purist,—he should take pleasure in complying with my request, but he has in vain racked his brain for an instance in point.

Gilbert Parker, now a member of the English House of Commons, feels the responsibility of his own "sins" in the direction of word-coinage. It is probable that he has been guilty, but he believes he has also had the good taste not to be proud of his inventions and to have forgotten them with becoming haste. He finds himself unable to resurrect these monuments of literary ambition,

though wishing me all success in the undertaking.

Charles Barnard can only say that he has not knowingly been guilty of the offense of word-coining. He has always found the English language quite sufficient for all his purposes. He has, on the other hand, assisted at the quiet extinction of several useless words of a technical nature. In his work on the Century Dictionary he suppressed a number of words that now have no use and are disappearing. There are, however, a great number of new and useful words that have not exactly been coined, but have been evolved naturally out of the necessity for new terms to describe new things. There are many of these really good words now in daily use in the arts and trades, and my correspondent thinks that a series of essays on such words would be well worth doing.

Margaret Sutton Briscoe has contributed no words of her own that she knows of to the language. She is not, in fact, in much sympathy with that practice, valuable as it has often proved. If she has ever coined words in her writing, it has been done unconsciously. There seems to her something artificial in the conscious effort unless some new form of expression cryingly demands a new word; then, she thinks, it should rather creep by proper usage into the language.

Viola Roseboro chooses out of courtesy to regard it as a compliment to be considered among possible word-coiners, but is rather grieved, she

finds, at not being able to produce one little word of her own coinage; and yet she thinks she has been right in always regarding herself as too small a person to take such creation upon herself.

Winston Churchill, the author of those much discussed novels, *Richard Carvel* and *The Crisis*, with rather unnecessary modesty regrets to say that, in the limited course of his compositions, he has never coined any original words, nor does he feel that he has advanced far enough in his profession to give any views of value on the subject.

Robert Barr, who has the good fortune to be a Scotchman, a Canadian, and an American rolled into one, writes jocularly from England, asking why he should coin words when there are thousands now in the language which he doesn't know the meaning of and which he can't spell. The man who would coin a word would coin a lead dollar, he asserts. He also says that if Kipling, Mark Twain, Saltus, Hawthorne, Stedman, and numerous others have confessed to me that they have committed this crime, then it is my duty not to write a book on it, but to inform the police and get this notorious gang of counterfeiters placed where they belong. The only man who has a right to coin a word, in Barr's opinion, is the inventor who makes a machine which comes into the world without a name, and therefore needs one. Tesla and Edison have the right to construct new words; Kipling and Howells have not. When I land these men in Sing Sing, Barr wants me to

let him know, and he will come over and "do time" with them; for if he does not invent words, he says he has committed other misdemeanors which entitle him to put on the same picturesque costume that they will wear, and—well, they are all excellent company, in jail or out.

Mary E. Wilkins is sorry, but she cannot remember coining any words, and is so very busy that she is unable to look through all her published works and to make the necessary notes.

Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford does not think she has ever coined a word. If she has, it has been unconsciously and ignorantly. She may have used some archaic words, clinging to the memory from readings in early English, but no more than most writers have done, she hopes.

Edith M. Thomas, while appreciative of the honor the inquiry implies, is not, she believes, able to add any word curios to this collection, and, indeed, if she had ventured upon any verbal invention in "the small plot of literature" in which she works, they would scarcely deserve perpetuation.

Save where there has been no escape from dialect, Owen Wister believes he never stepped outside the printed dictionary. He hopes not. My question about coining words made him open Worcester's Unabridged—it happened to open at page 1179, where he found *raip*, *raivel*, *rakee*, *rakeshame*, *rakestale*, *rakerein*, *ralliance*, *ralspite*, and *ramadan*, and as he had never heard of any of them before, he turned for consolation to another page. It happened to be 166, where

there struck his eye *boxen*, *boyar*, *boyan*, *boy-blind*, *boyism*, *boyn*, *boyship*, *brabble*, *braccate*, *brack*, *bracky*, *bracteolate*, and *brad*, to say nothing of *brachygraphy*, *brachystockhrone*, and some others,—some forty words on the first two pages he tried,—and all entirely unknown to him until that moment. Further experiments brought revelations equally humiliating. So, it will be seen, the English language is not only enough for Owen Wister, but a good deal too much, and he will not attempt to add to it at present.

A portion of this correspondence was published in the *Chautauquan*, and later, in the February (1900) number of that magazine, appeared a letter from Mr. Wister, as follows:

“EDITOR *Chautauquan*:

“DEAR SIR: In an article on the coinage of words recently published by you a writer (Ingersoll Lockwood) says, among other things, this: [Here Mr. Wister quotes what Ingersoll Lockwood says on page 120 of this book about Englishmen being the great word-makers, etc.]

“To these observations I shall offer no comments of my own; my being an American writer might impair their value. But as your journal is devoted to education, let me quote Professor Adams S. Hill, of Harvard University, in his book entitled *The Foundations of Rhetoric*, page 30:

“‘A writer of established reputation may succeed, now and then, in calling back words from

the grave; but even the greatest have failed in the attempt. A writer of established reputation may, by adopting a provincial or a vulgar word as his own, help to make it good English; but great authors are not those who are most swift to coin words themselves, or to use those which lack the stamp of authority. "The two most copious and fluent of our prose writers, Johnson and Macaulay, may be cited on this head," says a recent writer (John Earle, *English Prose*, London, Smith, Elder and Co., 1890), "for the first hardly ever coined a word; the second, never. They had not the temptation; their tenacious memories were ever ready with a supply of old and appropriate words, which were, therefore, the best, because their associations were established in them."

"If there were words enough in the language to supply the needs of Macaulay, there are surely enough for ordinary writers. For them the only safe rule is to use no word that is not accepted as good English by the best judges. This rule is well expressed by Pope (see p. 3). In our day obsolete or obsolescent words are less tempting than new-fangled expressions. For one devotee of old English who insists on writing "agone" for "ago" or "gone," or "inwit" for "conscience," or on publishing a "foreword" instead of a "preface," there are hundreds of ready writers who try their hands at the manufacture of new words, or who snap up the manufactures of others. Those who know least of English as it is are pre-

cisely those who are most ready to disfigure their sentences with English as it is not.'

"In closing, allow me to congratulate your contributor (Ingersoll Lockwood) upon his use of the word 'relationist.' On page 1209 of Worcester's Unabridged I find that it has hitherto meant relative."

The late William Preston Johnston, son of the Confederate General, Albert Sidney Johnston, and President of Tulane University of Louisiana, had a reverence for the English speech, and always did what he could to stand up for its purity. He was well aware that language is fluent, moving ever with the restless tide of human thought, and hence he could not set himself up to be what is called a purist, resisting every novelty of speech or new coinage of words adapted to new modifications of thought and condition. But he did not regard them as part of the speech of the people on the mere dictum of bold innovators or ingenious word-coiners, whether they represented newspapers or dictionaries. For his own part, he never consciously coined a word, unless in nonsense verses, and he found the English language sufficient for all the best thinking he could do. It seemed to him that most of the so-called word-coinages that he saw were merely counters or crude counterfeits. He did not deny, however, the right of any individual to utter them any more than he did the right to talk slang or thieves' Latin, for that matter. To him it was all a question of

taste—of the sense of duty that one feels in upholding the dignity of the mother tongue.

The late Professor Moses Coit Tyler did not remember that in serious writing and for publication he ever coined a word, but he did remember a number of instances where he was strongly tempted to do so, and when he resisted long enough he always found out that the English language was already copiously provided for the expression of any idea or shade of an idea that he had to communicate. In other words, he did not favor the free and unlimited coinage of words (for the uses of oral or printed discourse) any more than he did of silver, or potatoes, or cedar posts. Conservatism in language is a great virtue. Our language, being a living one, he thought would grow fast enough without any one's conscious effort thereto.

So far as he knows, George Cary Eggleston has never "sinned against the English language" by adding words of his own to it. He has always found its vocabulary adequate to the expression of every thought that his mind has been able to conceive. He has used dialect forms, of course, in writing dialect stories. Inasmuch as we have in English a vocabulary three or four times as great as that of any other language, Eggleston has never felt it incumbent upon him to add anything to the list of words permitted in order to write English. If, in any moment of inadvertence, he has used in his writings a word not found in the dictionaries, or if he has used a word

in a sense not recognized by the dictionaries of the English language, he has only to beg the pardon of the English language, which is the one thing he has studied most diligently and which he respects most of all things in the world.

Other letters of the same or of similar import might be mentioned, but enough is as good as a feast. We have here many a hint of *author-dox-y*, if the levity may be permitted, and some good words are cached in this volume for those who wish to use them. There are others which would need an apology, were they not worthless on their face.

It is not easy to classify those authors who seem to be "on the fence," irresolute, and uncertain which side to take or what to think; or, if they have well-riveted ideas on the subject, they seem to fear that they will be compromised somehow by letting them out. No small number of others are disinclined to rummage through their published works (and who could blame them?) for their coinages, as though ashamed to uncover them to the glare of posterity. I think those belonging to this class might better have disavowed *in toto* their offenses, for so they appear to regard them, judging from the sheepish phraseology of their admissions.

Still others perhaps reserve the right to exploit their verbal confections in their own way at some future time, should there be any glory attached to their excavations by virtue of the possible public

scramble for such relics. At all events, they are laid away in our literary catacombs, and it is not my ambition to exhume them after the method of the body snatcher.

CHAPTER X.

SLANG.

THERE is slang and slang.

Let us first have Webster's definition.

"Slang—a new word that has no just reason for existence ; a popular but unauthorized word, phrase, or mode of expression ; the jargon of some particular calling or class in society."

According to this, all words and expressions not approved by the lexicographers are slang. They cease to be such only when, by reason of long-continued popularity and general usage, they are deemed worthy of a place in the dictionary.

"The definition of words," says Hannah More, "is often involved in their etymology," and for this reason slang has to serve an apprenticeship, so to speak, before it is raised, if at all, to the dignity of a generic meaning. It is held on probation until it either wins its brevet of literary acceptance or dies of atrophy, as languages themselves die. We often know what a slang word signifies, without knowing anything at all about its pedigree or genealogy. (Indeed, nine times out of ten it is a bastard or half-breed, and often not even that. It comes into the world without formal birth, and

in this, as in other respects, it differs from the consciously evolved word, which has Greek or Latin or other linguistic ancestors. Words which are the product of the study and the laboratory have the advantage of noble blood to start with ; while the pariah word shuffles along through the alleys of the slums, unable to tell who its father was. Nor would its father, if it had one, care to own it.

Yet the English language is steadily enriched by words and phrases selected from this jargon of particular callings or classes in society. It embodies particularly the judgments of human nature as it exists to-day, and is so articulated as to conform best to the cast of the average modern mind. It is *sui generis*, and it is as genuine as the mushroom, which it resembles in the quickness and mystery of its growth. It may seem sometimes to be a counterfeit, but is never a conscious counterfeit ; that is to say, it is not consciously evolved according to philologic formulas, and therefore its similarity to some other word is purely accidental.

We may say that intuitive reason plays its part as much as ever it did in the drama of language ; only slang is the venting, the makeshift, of the unlettered masses. To say that no principle of analogy, of onomatopoeia, or of metaphor enters into this kind of speech is to deny that the people have intelligence ; whereas among them is the most mother wit, the best common sense, and from their loins spring the greatest men of genius.

When authoritative writers begin to use a slang phrase or idiom then there is promise that it will gain admission into the next dictionary. Bartlett says: "Slang terms will remain in use only so long as they may be useful in colloquial language. They may then be supplanted by others more expressive, and sink into oblivion." But a certain percentage of them become engrafted on our language, and the slang of fifty years ago may be elegant usage to-day.

(Slang is a necessity—to Wall street, to fashionable clubs, to the college youth, to pugilists, to thieves, to the police, to the factory, to politicians, to sportsmen, to the stage, to sailors, to soldiers, to shopkeepers, and what not. A large proportion of the population uses it, and in many cases it is terse and decidedly effective. Some very curious metaphors have been welded into and become a part of our Americanese. It seems to be the tendency of the illiterate masses to settle all things, great and small, by an epigram or an epithet. Hence it is out of the question for purists to abolish slang.) But before going further into the general subject let us ascertain what the character of current American slang is by citing various examples of it.

Though it is condemned as a vulgar colloquialism by those who would keep the "well of English pure and undefiled," the term "hustler" is singularly descriptive and understood by everybody. He is a product of our bustling, rushing, competitive American life. No other word ex-

presses quite so comprehensively this energetic human unit, and the word doubtless has come to stay. It has an excuse for living in that it can boast of blood relations in the dictionary.

That densely thronged neighborhood lying between the Bowery and the East River, known as the East Side, in New York, is perhaps the most prolific breeder of slang in this country. There toil and hagggle and exist "all sorts and conditions of men"; there one hears a Babel of tongues, and out of this polyglot of Polak, Yiddish, Italian, Syrian, French, German, and so on come many of the verbal suggestions which rapidly gain currency, and through the lips of the American street Arab receive such twists and modifications as are necessary to mold them into the semblance of English. Of the terms you hear in this squalid region, as you may hear them elsewhere, a partial list follows, with their meanings:

"In the push," synonymous with "in the swim," which latter phrase, by the way, is society slang.

"Long green"—green bills or greenbacks.

"A wad," "a bundle," and "a bunch"—all mean rolls of green bills, hence "a thick wad."

"To brace" is to borrow.

"To touch" sometimes means to steal and sometimes to borrow.

"To swipe" is to steal.

"To pinch" means to steal; also to arrest a person.

"On your uppers" is to have no money.

“To throw a front” or “bluff” means to look well and prosperous with no money in your pocket or within your control.

“To spar for meals” means to struggle for life.

“To look for trouble” means wanting to fight.

“Dead easy” and “to walk down Easy street” are to do anything easily.

“To win hands down” means an easy victory.

“To growl” is to threaten, and do no more.

“To turn down” and “to call down” mean to repulse, to suppress, to put a stop to.

“To throw down” means to do a mean trick.

“Lost in the shuffle” means sunk out of sight.

“A cop” is a policeman, equivalent to the English “bobby,” which is occasionally heard.

“A scrapper” is a man who fights.

“A farmer” is a general slang term for any man who does not know much, coming, of course, from the cockney contempt of the country and the countryman.

“A gilley” is synonymous with “farmer.”

“A yap” and “a jay” are synonymous with “farmer” and “gilley.”

“A con” is an abbreviation of confidence man.

“A mug” is any kind of a citizen, but usually has a more or less contemptuous meaning.

“A lush” is one who drinks.

“A chink” is a Chinaman.

“A guiney,” also “a dago,” is an Italian.

“A fly fakir,” a gypsy term, meaning simply a

shrewd, plausible, inventive man. In other words, an ingenious liar.

"It's up to you" means something menacing or dangerous, requiring one's best powers to meet it.

"Up against it" means an ordeal or ill luck of any kind.

A professional appreciator, a man who laughs at everything, pays for nothing, and is universally sympathetic, is known as a "genial."

"The handshaker" is another name for a "genial."

An honest man is described by the terms "dead square" and "dead white." It may be said that "dead" and "smooth" are words which are used continually and before many a slang term. They are used both singly and together, as a "smooth handshaker," "dead smooth genial." "Smooth" means shrewd; thus a man can be "dead smooth," denoting oily and dishonest. In New York it is a term of reproach; in college slang it is rather an expression of praise than otherwise.

"To have your hand out" is to beg, and "a man with his hand out" is a beggar.

"To stake" and "to heel" mean to lend.

"To give a flash" is to show money.

"To give up" and "to blow in" mean to spend money.

"To stand off" is to have charged, to get something on credit, or to put off or get extended the time of payment of an obligation.

"He wouldn't stand for it" means chiefly to disclaim responsibility or to repudiate an accusation, though it is applied to other instances.

"Well-heeled" is a term borrowed from the cock-pit, and means to have plenty of money.

"Lush," "booze," "a ball," and "hops" for beer, and "red liquor" for all sorts of spirits except gin are some of the many terms for drink.

"Chasing the can," or the "duck," "rolling the rock," and "rushing" or "working the growler" all mean sending the tin can to the corner bar-room for beer. In the West they call it "canning beer."

"In the know" means behind the scenes, so to speak.

"To croak" is to die; whereas "to do a croak" and "to do a gun croak" mean to be shot.

"A cold frost" and "frost crystals" and "he gave me the marble heart" mean to be treated coldly.

"The glad hand" means a real or simulated warmth of greeting.

"To queer" really means to place one in a false position; but it also has other meanings, as "shoving the queer"—that is, to pass counterfeit money, or, as when a man hits another on the head with a club, in slang parlance he "queers" him with a club.

"Wouldn't that jar you?" is self-defined.

"Blind baggage" means riding between freight cars and is a tramp expression.

who could do it without losing somewhat, if not much, of the vigor and virility of the "Sage of Chelsea."

"I am not a man scrupulous about words or names or such things," said Oliver Cromwell, in one of his weak moments. If he had taken more pains in these very matters, he would have been a greater man. The mistake often made by one of our finest American singers was to drop from his higher moods into flippancy, or, what was far worse, into punning. But who shall say that an author must not use a slang term—always assuming that it is a decent one? Slang is not always humorous or satirical: it may be pathetic, nay, deeply serious. In a few strokes Sterne could sketch a mental picture or delineate a character. He was a fine colorist with words, but he never let them blur his thoughts. These flowed naturally and clearly. Few books possess the qualities of refined feeling, the many graces of phraseology, the unique and not too obvious humor, the coherence of subtle reasoning, and the charming variety of style to such a degree as *A Sentimental Journey*. Yet Sterne used slang more or less and did not refrain from filching a felicitous phrase now and then from a contemporary or predecessor.

Spoken slang, if anything, is more offensive to refined ears than printed slang, because it usually is uttered with bravado or animus, and its full force comes upon one like a shock. The same sensibilities that are so frequently harried by vulgar

slang are the readiest to perceive that, as George Eliot puts it, "The right word is always a power, and communicates its definiteness to our action." But in the hands of a skilful author slang is made diverting, if not edifying. What gives to Mary E. Wilkins' New England stories their chief charm to me is their true-to-nature touches, and particularly the life-like dialogue of her characters. I believe that it is through works such as hers that the provincialisms and idioms of a certain section expand and become general slang. Bret Harte is minutely faithful to the colloquial traditions of the California mines of the pioneer period, which he describes in a classical style that offers all the more agreeable and striking contrast to the coarse verbalities of Yuba Bill, the typical parlance of Jack Hamlin, and the vernacular of Poker Flat and Red Gulch. George W. Cable happily caught the indigenous expressions of the Creoles of New Orleans; and you find in his books that some of his best characterizations are brought out in the language of the quarters, voiced by the personages themselves. The same is true of Kipling's stories of life in India and the far East; of F. Marion Crawford's Italian tales; of Mr. Howells' narratives of contemporaneous life among middle-class types in Boston, New York, etc. With equal justice and discrimination it may be said of Hamlin Garland's delineations of the native and Scandinavian population of the Great Northwest; of Gilbert Parker's browsings in Canada;

of James Lane Allen's portraiture of Kentucky life ; of Joel Chandler Harris's studies of the Georgia negro ; and of a score or more of others that might be mentioned.

The main secret of Dickens' popularity was that he knew his types ; their counterparts were in real life. They talked the argot of the London slums, the bombast of the Old Bailey, the synco-phantic phrases of the counting-room, the cockney jargon of the slap-up swells. English slang, of course, is no longer what it was when Dickens wrote, and in judging his works now allowances should be made for these changes. Wherein certain historical romances of our day fail artistically is in the fact that their personages, with few exceptions, speak in the language of the last decade of the nineteenth century, which very greatly mars the illusion ; for no one who has studied the epoch with which *When Knighthood was in Flower* deals, for instance, will argue that the modes of thought and expression of the princess Mary Tudor and of Henry VIII. were identical with our own.

I have shown the character of the street slang of large cities, and is it not a sorry commentary upon the intelligence of so many thousands of people who confine themselves to this kind of discourse that they are really incapable of expressing an original idea in terms conforming to the rules of syntax and good taste ? Their mental horizon is bounded by these verbal shambles ; the garden of their minds is overgrown with the

poisonous fungi and weeds of language. Like slaves to the drug habit, there seems to be no hope for them. The user of slang from youth becomes hopelessly dependent upon it. Would not a refined man be likely to change his opinion of a sweet and adorable creature to whom he said, "Be mine!" and who replied: "Oh, come off!"—one of those delightful (?) non-sequiturs for which some women display so extreme a liking? And there are authors whose center of gravity sinks so low that they become top-heavy with conceit, and then their literary malversations often challenge and merit the kind of criticism which is neither timid nor indulgent.

We now come to general slang. In one of his "London Letters" William L. Alden wrote: "Not long ago there was a discussion in one of the London dailies as to the origin of the expression 'so long,' in the sense of good-by. Some one suggested that it was American, but an American replied that the expression was quite unknown in America, which shows that the writer had never read his Walt Whitman and that he knew very little of America. I had supposed that the expression came from California, but according to Whitman it was known in New York before we ever heard of California slang. From what it is derived I have not the slightest idea, but that it is American is as certain as that b'gosh is American."

This phrase reminds me of a floral wreath seen at the funeral of a promising Harvard stu-

dent some years ago. It bore the letters S. Y. L., which, not being the initials of the deceased, created much curiosity as to what they stood for. To the wreath was attached the card of the sender,—a fellow-student,—who, on being asked what the S. Y. L. meant, replied: “See you later”—a phrase which became and still remains as common as “so long.”

“Another American expression,” says Mr. Alden, “is very often used in London, without a suspicion of its origin. English women say ‘Great Scott!’ and never dream that they are celebrating the fame and name of Winfield Scott. In the days of the Mexican War, when we were decidedly younger than we are at present, we firmly believed that General Scott was the greatest general the world had ever seen. It became the fashion in the army to swear by him, and the custom has spread to England, although General Scott is nearly forgotten, and the Mexican War now ranks in our estimation with the war with Sitting Bull.”

Though Mr. Alden’s version of the origin of this exclamatory expression appears probable enough, some enthusiastic admirer of Sir Walter Scott may trump up a story equally plausible to show that “the Wizard of the North” was the inspiration of it. A great many of our slang words undergo changes among the costers after they reach London. Such Londonese as “Urry lydy, don’t tike all dye,” “I’m not in that clawss,” etc., seems like a patois to unaccustomed

American ears. Into the talk of the day creep many terms and phrases that are first familiar to the stage, the prize-ring, the race-course, etc. A complete glossary of these graphic expressions would require a large volume. In fact, divers dictionaries of slang have been published from time to time.

The gibberish of thieves is so extensive as to be almost a language in itself. Only among themselves and by policemen who are forced to acquire the knowledge of its meaning is it understood. Many of the terms that have been in use for years had their origin among the "fences" or depots for the reception of stolen goods in London, and are really corruptions from the Hebrew. This jargon, while continued for years, has never obtained outside of the police and the criminal classes. The terms used by English thieves differ in many respects from those in use among American rogues. Here are some of them:

"A nark" is a police spy.

"A toygetter" is a burglar.

"A broadsman" is a watch stealer.

"A snide-pitcher" is a card sharp.

"A man at the duff" is an utterer of false money.

"A skittle sharp" is a passer of false jewelry.

"The chat" is a house.

"The wedge" is silver.

"The kipsy" is a basket to hold the loot.

"Piping the reeler round the double" is seeing the policeman at the corner.

The vernacular of the chase and of the open season, as used in England, was invented by sportsmen evidently of picturesque minds, and in the main is both sensible and appropriate. Some of the mighty St. Huberts of the United States may not be altogether familiar with this nomenclature, which includes:

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| A sleuth of bears. | A cast of hawks. |
| A troop of monkeys. | A watch of nightingales. |
| A skulk of foxes. | A bevy of quail. |
| A pride of lions. | A trip of dottrel. |
| A gang of elk. | A stand of plover. |
| A sounder of hogs. | A building of rooks. |
| A siege of herons. | A clattering of doughs. |
| A hide of pheasants. | A plump of wild fowl. |
| A whisp of snipe. | A brood of grouse. |
| A muster of peacocks. | A covey of partridges, etc. |

The political slang word "Gerrymander," which originated in Boston in the spring of 1812, compactly expresses what otherwise would require several sentences to explain. "Humbug" was once slang, but it is so no longer. It is not to be preferred, however, to "deceive," nor is "bamboozle" to be preferred to "mislead." "Reynakaboo," to express fraud or misrepresentation, has passed the slum stage, but it is not the more desirable because it happens to get into respectable newspapers now and then. "Mugwump," which came into vogue during Cleveland's first campaign for President, is now good American, for the reason that it means something that no other word

expresses, and that is the test of good slang. It is the survival of the fittest. It will be in every dictionary in the year 1950, just as the good slang of fifty years ago is in the lexicons of to-day.

An English literary journal of high standing points out that Stevenson's peculiar phrases—and it must be admitted that some of them are peculiar—will be far less likely to jar upon the ears of posterity than upon ours. "Only the other day some of our correspondents traced back the word 'brick,' used as a term of endearment to Aristotle and Plato, and in another fifty years critics may trace back Stevenson's expression, 'Merivale is a howling cheese' to Juvenal and Catullus."

"Hobos," now the common name for tramps, is said to be a Southern corruption of hoe boys, and originally was applied to itinerant laborers who came to the South during the cotton season.

A local word in New York, "pantata," meaning the old man or the man in authority, had some vogue six or seven years ago, but it did not get into general circulation, probably because it partook more of the nature of a "gag" than of slang.

In the sentence, "Get on to the shirt-waist man, if you want to see something out of sight," are two slang phrases, the latter of which, already referred to, is one of those anachronisms that imply a meaning just the reverse of the declaration. One of the most popular and common phrases of the day, it is a synonym for the superlative in appearance, performance, or accomplish-

ment. It was the balloon soaring skyward that was first declared out of sight, and then came the adaptation of this new form of expressing altitude and exemption from competition.

"Isn't in it" is a term borrowed from the turf. The race-track has also given us "cinch," as meaning something settled beyond all doubt or peradventure. A cinch is a saddle girth, tightened by the Spanish method of a complicated knot that will not come untied. Hence cinch, or sure thing, cinched, or all settled beforehand—can't lose.

As applying to mental delinquency, "off his base" came from the base-ball field. Of doubtful origin is the phrase "wheels in his head," descriptive of a man with cranky notions, later converted into "he has a Ferris" (suggested by the big Ferris wheel at the Chicago World's Fair), implying that the person under discussion has a very decided delusion. These phrases gave way to the more popular one, "off his trolley," which very terse and descriptive term comes, of course, from the street-car world.

"Switched," with the meaning of diverted, came from the railroad yards; also "side-tracked," meaning temporary failure or suspension, the result of outside interference; "ditched," as expressing ruin and collapse; and "wide open," referring to the throttle of the locomotive and the extreme of speed, although it has since come to mean in full swing, reckless, and regardless of interference, frequently applied to the former condition of

things in New York. In this connection the New York *World* coined the word *wideopenness* in a leading article not long ago.

From the mining camps of the far West have come many terms. Mark Twain once said: "The slang of Nevada is the richest and most infinitely varied and copious that has ever existed anywhere in the world, perhaps, except in the mines of California in the early days. It was hard to preach a sermon without it and be understood."

Among these terms may be mentioned: "Struck it rich," which now applies to any human success; "up the flume," signifying failure; "hard pan," meaning a solid paying basis; "petered out," which suggests a gradual decline and final suspension of resources; "grubstake"—that is, assistance given a new business enterprise on condition of a share in prospective or possible profits. For thirty years bonanza has been a good American word, and the Century Dictionary accepted it along with such words as "boom," meaning to manufacture support and enthusiasm, and "squeal," meaning to confess and betray companions, synonymous with the English "peach." And that reminds me of the phrase, "He had a narrow squeak," meaning escape; also of "He's N. G."—that is, no good, said of a worthless fellow. The term "fat," now in general use, as indicative of something of maximum remuneration for minimum exertion, sprang from the composing-rooms of the newspaper.

Circus slang was the forerunner of the argot

of the variety, now called the vaudeville, stage; for the circus folk had a language of their own in the good old days when "the gas-lit city of tents" was planted upon the village green. The names of various parts of the tent and equipment supplied the roots of this vernacular. The boss of the show was called "the main guy." This expression, to a certain extent, has survived the decline of the circus, and "the main guy" is still heard in the workshops. We also hear a peculiar man spoken of as a "queer guy." Almost unintelligible are the conversation and "shop talk" of acrobats, sketch teams, seriocomics, song-and-dance men, and the lower order of Thespians. For instance, struck by the similarity of the words pardon and pudding, some knockabout artist conceived the expression "I beg your tapioca," but there is no danger that in the polite world it will ever supersede "I beg your pardon."

Actors bring into existence many of these short-lived, but more or less expressive, phrases. "The ghost walks" is one of the few instances of the parlance of stageland that has survived the years and become general. Many years ago an actor cast for the ghost in *Hamlet* refused to go on with his part until his demands for a portion of long-delayed salary were acceded to. He was paid and went on; "the ghost walked," and gradually thereafter the phrase was adopted as expressive of the payment of actors' salaries. And to-day it is among the most frequent and common

things heard said by the histrionic loungers on the Rialto. "An angel" is a man who innocently backs unprofitable or questionable enterprises to the profit of the promoters solely. It is a term of contempt. Many "an angel" is victimized in theatrical speculation. The continuous performance, instituted by B. F. Keith in 1885, has brought into the theatrical profession the word *chaser*—one who does a turn or an act at two or three places of amusement nightly.

The term "round up" was given to the world by the great cattle-ranges of the West. Originally it referred to the annual gathering together of the cattle of various owners that they might be separated for shipment. In the business world of to-day it indicates an inquiry into the affairs of a firm or corporation, and has really the significance of stock-taking.

The lingo of every Jack Tar is salted with the briny flavor of the Seven Seas. It would be impossible to give here more than a few of the more characteristic phrases derived from the sea. First comes to put things "ship shape," then to be ready "in a brace of shakes"—*i. e.*, before the sail has flapped three times; to "kick up a breeze"; to "steer a middle course"; to "steer clear" of a man; to follow a thing to the "bitter end"—that is, to pay out cable until there is no more left at the bitts; to "tell it to the marines"; to "go to Old Nick," or St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors; to "look out for squalls"; to be left "high and dry"; to recognize a man by the

“cut of his jib”; to leave a comrade “in the lurch”; to be “hard up,” or to “bear up for Poverty Bay”; to be “half seas over,” used by writers from Dean Swift downward as expressive of too much drinking; to “run the gantlet” (properly gantlope), once a well-known ordeal on shipboard; to “cut and run”; to have a “snug berth”; to give a man a “wide berth”; to bring a man to his “bearings”; to be “taken aback”—*i. e.*, by a sudden change of wind; to “keep aloof”—*i. e.*, to keep your luff when sailing to the wind, a term in common use on land, says a writer in *Temple Bar*, since the days of Matthew Paris—say about the middle of the thirteenth century.

The slang of a crowd at a political meeting: A man sings out, “What’s the matter with McKinley?” And the assemblage promptly answers as with one tremendous voice: “He’s all right!” This is conclusive and leaves nothing more convincing to be said.

The mountaineers of Missouri say: “Stop your glattering”—that is chattering; whereas they say in Wales, “What you glabbering about?” These are provincialisms which should interest the philologist; but what I have to say about provincialisms must be reserved for the next chapter.

Much of the slang quoted in the foregoing pages is ephemeral, because it is silly, weak, and far-fetched. The present writer does not advise any one to memorize the stock speech of the East Side. It has been cited somewhat *in extenso* in

order that its invidious and detestable character—and I have avoided quoting indecent specimens—might the better substantiate my sincere protest against its use.

Why does the average school-girl use “awfully nice” and “horribly ugly” and other superlatives so often? Is it because she has a limited supply of words to select from and must therefore repeat herself? Holding a glass of water in her hand, the giddy Frenchwoman exclaimed: “If it were only wrong to drink this, how delicious it would be!” In some such spirit of mischief many presumably refined society women use *outré* expressions and slang. It was said that the color of the rose came from the blood of Venus, who pricked her foot on a thorn. No such pretty conceit could be contrived to account for the drab and purple talk of some of our bachelor girls. Think you such crass phrases as “I guess you’re not so much,” “She has a bat in her belfry,” “Wouldn’t that rattle your slats?” gain any elegance or refinement of meaning by being spoken through the lips of a beautiful woman? Indeed, would not such talk go far to rob her of her personal charms? Yes, I believe that superficial culture and meager vocabularies among American women (Boston blue stockings excepted) explain in a large measure the unhappy choice of their words, but they should not always accuse their brothers, lovers, husbands, or their little sons of having taught them such phraseology.

Do you remember what Shenstone says?—

“The common fluency of speech in many men, and most women, is owing to a scarcity of matter and a scarcity of words; for whoever is master of a language, and moreover has a mind full of ideas, will be apt, in speaking, to hesitate upon a choice of both; but common speakers have only one set of ideas and one set of words to clothe them in, and they are always ready at the mouth. Just so people can come faster out of a church when it is almost empty than when a crowd is at the door.”

Emerson says of Montaigne: “His words are vascular—if you cut them, they will bleed.” If you cut the words of some people, you would find that those words could claim no title to the Peerage of the English language. If critics and criticasters of this book protest that our language is adulterated enough now without suggesting other rubbish, I answer, paraphrasing from the light-hearted lover of Highland Mary:

The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
A word's a word for a' that—

That is, if it be a real word; some so-called words are not words. ~~X~~ If they object to the slang and Americanese introduced here, I ask them if they can conceive of anything better calculated to demonstrate the inherent beauty of the English language than the perversions thereof? Such things—college slang, for example—are the outgrowth of youthful ebullitions of spirit. When is the time for a man to sow his philologic

wild oats if it is not when he is an undergraduate? "The glowing periods of the masters of our language seem even more beautiful," says a writer, "when contrasted with the vulgarisms of the slangy, and if a man can compress into his four undergraduate years his licenses of speech, and come forth into the larger life *slang-sore*, so much the better for his method of expressing his ideas."

It is to be lamented, however, that the proportion of slang in the conversation of school-boys amounts to nearly one-half of the entire body of their speech. W. J. Holland, LL. D., Chancellor of the Western University of Pennsylvania, overheard the following dialogue between two lads who are fondly supposed by their parents to be in training at a fashionable preparatory school for admission to one of the leading colleges of the country :

John—I say, Dick, pawn me your horse for half an hour. I must do a soak with which Doo-licks has stuck me.

Dick—All right. The old duffer gave me a soak, too, the other day. But don't keep the pony more than an hour. I need it myself.

John—Say, that Haggard is a peach. I made him mad this morning, and he up with his blooming fists and came and shook them under my snoot, and told me he would give me an agile stunt.

Dick—What did you do?

John—I caterpillared.

Dick—How did you travel in your Latin this morning?

John—Bully! I rowled and tore my shirt.

Dick—Good for you!

The subject of the foregoing conversation was the temporary loan of an interlinear translation of Homer's *Iliad*, familiarly known as a "pony," though sometimes called a "horse." Many a college youth rides through his Greek and Latin recitations on a pony. "A soak" appears to be a task imposed as a penalty. "An agile stunt" signifies a quick check—a sudden reprimand.

Now, not until a young man understands words and their proper uses will he know their sources in human feeling. When Horace Walpole penned his famous epigram: "Life is a comedy to him who thinks and a tragedy to him who feels" he did not characterize the impression of the man who does both. In order to accomplish any thinking that is worth while one must feel, and feel deeply. Wherefore any sort of conscious feeling without thought is impossible. But like many another epigram, this one of the eccentric Mr. Walpole's is true only in a limited sense. It is strange how numerous are the cant phrases and paradoxes which have caught and lingered in the popular fancy, but which, on analysis, are found to be but a clever play upon words. Of all the proverbs and precious maxims that have been bequeathed to this world of ours, at least seven-

tenths are literally false and misleading. And this recalls to mind Josh Billings' bright saying, which is wholly credible, that "it is better to be ignorant than to know so many things that ain't so."

It is certainly a great thing to have a metonymic gift like that of Bertha Runkle, or Booth Tarkington, or the late Stephen Crane, of whom Hamlin Garland has said, "The author had the genius which makes an old word new." It is a great thing, too, to employ such a gift in the right direction. None but the heaven-born poet may bring out of the vanished past the forgotten word, and by the divine alchemy of his art galvanize it and give it life.

"At dead of night he melts old joy, old truth, old
 pain,
 Through his new soul, and runs new forms of light;
 Till battered jewels, dull and marred, reset again,
 Receive new luster to enchant our sight."

Beautifully, indeed, has the Irish novelist, George Moore, described the evolution of language: "In its beginning a language is pure, like spring water; it can be drunk from the well—that is to say, from popular speech. But as the spring trickles into a rivulet and then into a river it has to be filtered, and after long use the language has to be filtered, too. The filter is the personal taste of the writer. We call the filter 'style.'"

If people better understood literary values, they would be more particular in their language.

Slang is usually affected by the laziest people and by those who have no time or inclination to think. As to the importance and immense satisfaction of word-study Archbishop Trench observes: "In words contemplated singly, there are boundless stores of moral and historic truth, and no less of passion and imagination laid up . . . I am sure, at least, that for many a young man his first discovery of the fact that words are *living powers*, are the vesture—yea, even the body—which thoughts weave for themselves, has been like the dropping of scales from his eyes, like the acquisition of another sense, or the introduction into a new world."

The great mass of slang, then, should not be encouraged. If, at times, it seems less formal than dignified language; if its saucy smartness seems to voice more vividly and directly the spirit of democracy and of *bonhomie*, it nevertheless is no more justifiable than rudeness on informal occasions. "Observation teaches," wrote Noah Webster, "that languages must improve and undergo great changes as knowledge increases, and be subject to continual alterations from other causes incident to men in society." As a means of expression and not the essential product of thought language is ever fluent, ever flexible. Like a ship, it gathers verbal barnacles; like a beautiful green plant, it attracts verbal parasites. These become the harder to eradicate the longer they are allowed to take root and thrive.

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 Slang is the scum of language, and is likely to generate literary miasmas perilous, if not fatal, to the health and vitality of that language. It possesses low minds completely and ever threatens to invade the realm of letters like a plague. Nothing is too sacred for its mockery. The most vapid gaucheries of thought will find somewhere admirers among the morbid and neurotic. To be glib in slang exclamations and phrases is considered by some persons as tantamount to inherent cleverness. Intellectual stupidity thus masquerades in the shoddy plumes of a sham vocabulary.

The English language has now—in fact, some time ago—reached a stage of conscious construction, not only of words for new inventions and discoveries, but of grammatic forms, of substitute words and phrases, and of the forms for recognized deficiencies. It is a dangerous and critical period just now for the English language. And it is every cultured and intelligent person's duty to oppose any and all changes or innovations which will tend to deteriorate or taint, in the slightest degree, our magnificent and immortal mother tongue.

CHAPTER XI.

PROVINCIALISMS AND AMERICANESSE.

I AM almost tempted to say that by provincialisms I mean Americanisms that may be related to Briticisms or to idioms of other languages ; and that by Americanese I mean the unique and curious words that have sprung up in the United States and are not cognate to any form of dialect or provincialism—pan-American words, if you please. Yet I perceive how hard it would be to keep to so arbitrary a distinction, and I shall not insist upon it, except for convenience.

Americanese often inspires doubt as to its legitimacy. Indeed, it may knock about, frankly discredited for the higher literary purposes, but tolerated and even petted by the average user.

It is a fairly safe rule that where you find the most ignorance you will find the most distinctive dialect, and where you go among people who are rough and degenerate, but with a certain kind of smartness and low cunning, you will hear the most slang.

Many so-called provincialisms have ceased to be provincial, so effective has been the fusing process of dialect words and phrases, and so gen-

eral the distribution of colloquialisms. Nor is it always right to call them Americanisms, so far as their etymology is concerned; for in apparently strange, though I think accountable, ways dialect words from remote peoples steal into our folk-speech. For all we know to the contrary, the Wild Man of Borneo, who was exhibited in this country years ago by Mr. Barnum, may have left a souvenir or two of his native speech, which we may hear often without knowing its origin.

A broad-minded writer tells us that "in the pursuit of words and phrases, of local idioms and honest Americanisms, the one thing to avoid is dogma, and the one thing to attend to, besides authentic quotations, is chronology. A dictionary of words should resemble a biographic cyclopedia—the closer, the better. And next to chronology, an American dictionary of American terms should report environment, locality, topography. It is wholly impossible that Montana and Boston talk exactly alike."

The sectional peculiarities of our speech, however, are daily diminishing. Fifty years ago there was a far more marked geographic distribution of intelligence in the United States than there is to-day, and a corresponding variety of colloquialisms, each more or less peculiar to a certain section of the country. But the uniform diffusion of the means of education, our methods of rapid communication, our newspapers, our shifting population—all these have combined to make known everywhere the forms of expression once

exclusively local. Consequently, in nothing is the student of provincialisms so liable to error as in assigning geographic limits to a word or phrase.

The fact is, our local dialects, as well as the local English dialects from which we get many of our folk-words and phrases, are pretty thoroughly mixed. Certain usages, however, cling to certain communities and gain no wide-spread currency. Of these more particularly mention will be made here. Professor George Hempl, of the University of Michigan, President of the American Dialect Society, recently read an interesting paper on how people talk to the cows in different parts of the country—"co' boss," "co' mully," "sook cow," and "come wench" being the most common calls.

In rural New York the word "orts"—the stubbly ends of hay which a fastidious horse leaves uneaten in his manger—is in common use. Some one of bucolic simplicity insists that "eat up your orts" would be a natural reproof to a child at table.

"Stillyurds," with which housewives weighed their mince-meat, is one of the old farm words. "Tow," a contemptuous or emphatic form of "Oh, no," is still in use; also "dah" for no. "M'm-h'm" and "uh-huh" for yes are heard all over the land. "'Sh-h" or "Śsh," a sibilant request or command to hush, to keep quiet, belongs to no dialect district: it is common from one end of the country to the other, as well as

in all parts of the world. The word "chunies," used affectionately of little children, is sometimes heard in the North, but seldom seen in print. The folk-speech of rural New York and that of New England have points of dissimilarity, but they are not so notable as they once were. The provincial word "resky," heard in New England, is doubtless a folk adaptation of the French Canadians' "risque," which has the same meaning.

Queer words may be said to run in families, and nearly every person employs some novel epithet which has no etymology. The remark of a certain old gentleman I know, when he is playing cards, is "let her squill," which his associates have come to understand means, "throw your card." His married daughter was once in the habit of saying, in school-girl style, "Well, I'll be everlastingly dinked." I asked her one day what she meant by it. She said she meant that she would be beaten in the game of pedro we were playing. So I suppose that to be "dinked" is to be defeated.

An old farmer in the Catskills came to a village merchant and said: "Mr. M——, I want to borrow some money, but I ain't in no damn strut about it"—meaning he wasn't in a great hurry. Here was an instance of semantics which I think was original with the man from Dry Brook.

Dr. Edward Caird says: "The use of an idea by any writer is by no means always limited by his own interpretation of it." This being true of

words as well, the accumulation of many meanings to a term is the result. Professor Bréal calls this phenomenon of multiplication *polysemia* (from *πολός*, "numerous," and *σημείον*, "signification"), and this tendency is illustrated in dialect as well as in literary words. For instance, *dingbat* seems to have had an eventful career. According to one authority, "it started as a ball of dirt on the legs of sheep in Vermont, became a smart spank to the Northern New Englander, a squabble, a flying missile, and money to the Maine lumberman, the biscuit of the New England boarding-school, while in Georgia it has turned to a mother's kiss, and you may there say of the girl you admire, 'She is a regular dingbat.'"

This is among the strange words and usages collected by the American Dialect Society. A New York newspaper amusingly cites other finds of this society. "We are told that on entering the house the Ithacan hangs up his *shock*, his hat and coat; the Otsego thief when caught looks *meeching* or guilty, even when he has stolen a mere *smitch*, a very small quantity." In the central part of the Empire State "sloughy is *lop-lolly*, sticky is *tacky*, you are *bushed* when you are tired, you *change off* when you move, you *go large* when you are extravagant, you pronounce hoax as a dissyllable, you *pooster* about when you are fussy, you are *in a yang* when in a hurry, and when violent you do things *kabang*, *kachunck*, *ka-flop*, *kaslam*."

But this is not all; our rulers up the State

are said to express their amazement by such euphemisms as "Geeswax Christmas," and "I'll be dingswizzled and hornswaggled." "On Staten Island splendid is *galloptious*, titbits are *manavellins*, and to turn is *to tarre*. Patchogue says *noink* and *suink* for nothing and something. In the northwestern part of the State, when two young hearts begin to beat as one they are said to be *scamuljugated*. The farmers of Orange and Sullivan Counties have the reprehensible practice of making their maple syrup by melting the sugar; this they call *alamagoozillum*."

As for the metropolis, we learn that in fashionable boarding-houses we may be requested to *trun* the butter; that the watermen say that a schooner is *wung out* when she sails wing and wing, that *drug* for drew and *scrope* for scraped may be heard among New Yorkers.

In the Tennessee mountains sugar is sweetening, but molasses is long sweetening; a man subject to fits is fitified, and his past tenses are fotch and holp and seed and squeez and swole. Down there very much is a heap sight, or a good few, or some several, or way yander.

"The sty-baked or stay-at-home Jersey matron *coosters* or potters around the house, calls her preserves *do-ups*, pork *spak* (perhaps derived from the German *Speck*), her husband, if need be, a *lobscouse* or *loper*, meaning a worthless fellow."

Some typical words come from the shores of Newfoundland, where *lolly* is the ice and snow in

the water near the shore, soft snow is *slob*, a hole in the ice is a *swatch*. A fisherman is just *scrammed* when he is thoroughly chilled. He calls a sleet storm a silver thaw, and the sound of the waves breaking on the shore is *vote*. "His improperly baked bread is *dunch*, the material for his fish balls is *huggernum buff*,¹ unfair behavior is *hunkersliding*, and a quid of tobacco is *old sojer*. He calls fish that is not sorted *tolqual*, which is the French *tel quel*, as the Maine backwoodsman's *comprompo* for a Frenchman is *comprend pas*, and the Gloucester fisherman's *matross* for a sailor is the German *Matrose*.

"*Coof* is the name for an off-islander in Nantucket; on Mount Desert the summer visitor is a *rusticrator*; a stupid Vermonter is a *dodunk*; a *goober grubber* digs peanuts in Tennessee. When a man is confused, he is *mommixed* in Kentucky, he is *muxed up* in Otsego County (N. Y.), *galleyied* in New Bedford, *stodged* in Indiana, and *wuzzled* in Central New York. 'I don't hurt for it' means 'I don't care' in Mississippi, while 'I don't mind it a bit' implies terror in North Carolina, where a great calamity is scandalous. The sunset is *day-down* on the Virginia coast. A man has *large money* in Cincinnati, he has *scuds* of it in Missouri, and a *session* of it in Georgia. When a Terre Haute citizen is sullen he is *putchiky*, and

¹The Philadelphians eat what they call "scrapple," which is made of pork and Indian meal or hominy, boiled together and cooled in a dish. When wanted for use, it is cut in slices and fried, much as hominy is.

if too weak to get out of bed, is *on the lift*, while a *pawky* Ohioan is one in poor health, and a mentally weak Kentuckian is *slack twisted*. *Hogo* is a strong smell in New Hampshire, where a severe storm is a *tan toaster*. Missouri slush is *sposh*. Green corn remains *roast'n ear* in Florida, even when it is canned, and there a cow may give birth to a yearling."

Professor Richard Burton says: "Study the freshest, most flavorful American idiom,¹ and where is its source? In the West, three times out of four." This is largely true, no doubt, but we should bear in mind that many of these so-called Western idioms are merely transplanted exotics. There is a popular notion that the old question, "Who's hyer?" gave the name to the Hoosier State, but this is more than improbable. The term Hoosier is not indigenous to Indiana, if, as is claimed, it was taken there by early settlers from North Carolina mountains, where an uncouth person was once, and perhaps still is, called a Hoosier.

It is well known that no small portion of Indiana was settled by North Carolinians, and what is more likely than that they brought the term with them? As a localism Hoosier, of course, has lost its Carolina meaning, though Indiana is still the Hoosier State. Jesse S. Reeves, of Richmond, Ind., has found the name in print as early as 1836, and in writing about ten years earlier. In

¹ Farmer's *Americanisms Old and New* is an excellent reference book.

the northern part of the State the folk-speech differs somewhat from that of the southern. A strong Yankee twang is heard in the north, which was settled mainly by people from northern Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, and New England; while in the south the pioneers came chiefly from the Carolinas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, and southern Ohio. Hence the dialect of this region is marked by the southern influence, and has some features of resemblance to the negro and the "poor white" or cracker dialect. Rarely met with further north, the expression "right smart" is used generally in central and southern Indiana.

But exact geographic bounds cannot be given to the Hoosier dialect; for it extends beyond the state lines into Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, and Michigan, gradually becoming modified and shading off into other colloquialisms. Of course, other folk-speech extends into Indiana in much the same way. Hoosiers who have migrated to States farther west probably speak their dialect in almost its original form; while expressions ostensibly of Hoosier birth have been scattered broadcast over the country.

The word "tote" is a part of Hoosier dialect, yet it did not originate in Indiana. Most persons probably would associate it with the negro, who uses the word freely in dialect stories. As early as 1677 the word was used in Virginia, where there were four times as many white bond-servants at that time as there were negroes. In

Maine, where negroes were unknown, there are old post-roads that went by the name of "tote roads." Moreover, the word was a common one in England during the seventeenth century. It scarcely can be of African origin then, nor is it used exclusively by the negroes.

Though often met with in Hoosier dialect, the word "cantankerous" is not confined to the bounds of Indiana. It is certified by the usage of no less a writer than Thackeray, who speaks of a "cantankerous humor," cited in Webster. In her story, *The Casting Vote*, Miss Murfree (Charles Egbert Craddock) puts into the mouth of the coroner the sentence: "He's ez hard-headed, an' tyrannical, an' perverse, an' cantankerous a critter ez ever lived." Even Chaucer, of whom Spenser sang as the "well of English undefyled," makes use of the word "conteke," from which "cantankerous" probably is derived.

The word "ord'nary," a variation of ordinary, and meaning common, mean, low down, is used in Indiana, but so it is elsewhere. A word often heard is "mosey"—in such expressions as, "He moseyed off down the creek." It seems to have the Hoosier stamp. In central Indiana, at least, it means to saunter along, to walk slowly and aimlessly, and is rarely or never used in the sense given by the dictionaries, which is to move off quickly, to get out, to light out, to hustle. Equally erroneous are most accounts of its derivation. One author tells a story of a defaulting postmaster named Moses, who left be-

tween two days, and in this account the word is absurdly connected with the name and manner of flight. Possibly the word comes from the Spanish imperative verb *vamos*, "go"—i. e., it may be a variant of "vamoose," which is so derived, and which has some of the meanings ascribed to "mosey."

The elliptic phrases "wants out" and "wants in," in such sentences as "the dog wants out," that is, "wants to go out," have been pointed out as peculiar to Indiana, but similar phrases—*e. g.*, "the hired man wants off"—are heard in many other places.

The unsigned writers of a sagacious article in the *Indianapolis News* (with some of the fat of which these paragraphs are larded) are compelled, they say, "to confess, and they take no shame to themselves for so doing, that in spite of considerable search, they have been unable to find a single provincialism which they would be willing to assert is at present confined to Indiana alone." In his recent book on *The Hoosiers*, Meredith Nicholson expresses grave doubts as to the existence of a distinct Hoosier dialect. "The real Hoosier," he says, "who has been little in contact with the people of cities, speaks a good deal as his Pennsylvania or North Carolina or Kentucky grandfather or great-grandfather did before him, and has created nothing new."

Probably some, if not all, of the following words and phrases are more frequently used in Indiana than elsewhere: "Heap-sight," as in "more

ground by a heap-sight"; "juberous," as in "I felt mighty juberous about crossin' the river"; "jamboree," in the sense of a "big time"; "flabbergasted"—*i. e.*, exhausted; "gargly"—*i. e.*, awkward; "I mind that," for I remember that; "bumfoozled"—*i. e.*, "rattled"; "whang-doodle," as in "Are you going to the whang-doodle to-night?"

In short, the abbreviations and contortions of words, the wrong accent or mispronunciation rather than the possession of expressions notably its own, give individuality to the Hoosier dialect, as to most others. The Hoosiers say *kyounty* for county, and call their State *Injeanny*. They make the "a" long-drawn and flat, as in "sasses," "saft," "pasnips." They use "further" for further, "sheer" for share, "kinder" or "kindy" for kind of, "kin" for can, "drap" for drop, "quare" for queer, "fur" for far, "jint" for joint, "ruinated" for ruined, "tuck" for took, "biler" for boiler, "sumpin" for something, "kittle" for kettle, "histed" for hoisted, etc.

Other frequent expressions are: "thing-a-majig," as in "What kind of a thing-a-majig have you got there?"—"slather,"¹ as in "He just slathers away and says anything"; "shenani-gan," to cheat; "fixin's," as in "pie an' cake, an' chicken, an' sich fixin's"; "hump your stumps"—*i. e.*, to make haste; "passel,"² as in "They're

¹ In southern New York is often heard the sentence: "He has slathers of money."

² Also common in some parts of England.

jest a passel o' fools"; "all-git-out," as in "It's rainin' to beat all-git-out."

An expression often used in some localities in Indiana, and said to be connected in derivation with doxology, is "socdolager." Say my ingenious authorities: "The doxology comes near the end of a 'meeting,' and when a man or a boy gives another a 'socdolager' (the similarity in sound must be apparent), the end of the fight is at hand." The temperature of the Hoosier is represented to be about normal, as a rule, but when his feelings are overwrought he resorts to a great variety of swear words and exclamations, such as: "Jerusalem crickets," "shucks," "by jing," "by cracky," "dinged if I don't," "jeeminy-crimminny-whiz," "gosh dauged," "gee whilliken," "by gravy," "by grab," "dad zooks," "dad burn," "by gum," "all fired," "I'll be dogon'd," or "dagon'd" (Barrie uses a similar form, "dagon't" in *Sentimental Tommy*), "for the land's sakes," "great Scott," "my goodness," "Oh, my," "the dickens" (which means little devil, being a contraction of the old diminutive devilkins), "laws-a-mercy," "plague take it." etc.

Thus it will be seen that much of what is called Hoosier dialect serves the same purpose in many other parts of the country. Dr. Weatherly, of the Indiana State University, in the course of some remarks pertinent to the subject of Hoosier dialect in literature, is reported as saying: "A few months ago I met a typical Hoosier in New York city. He was perfectly natural, perfectly

individual; but you will not find him in any of the books, for the truth is no one has yet succeeded in getting a real, live Hoosier into a book. Eggleston has given us his talk, and Riley has occasionally given us some delightful and promising mirror-like glimpses, but neither has quite succeeded. If we look long enough, we see that the man himself is not there. A certain indefinable something is wanting. Doubtless many persons have had much the same feeling. Some moderately good Hoosier dialect stories there undoubtedly are, but the characters in them have too often been either caricatures or else mere automatons."

Apropos of Americanese, "jimmermerig" and "jiggumbob" are heard now and then. They are sometimes applied to adjuncts of a woman's attire by men who cannot give a more lucid description of these sartorial accessories. Sometimes they are applied to parts of machinery the definite names of which are unknown to the observer. "Fad" is not Americanese, but according to the *New English Dictionary* its earliest appearance was in Hughes's *Life of Bishop Frazer*, published in 1834. The etymology of the word is unknown, but its origin is in current English dialects, chiefly Midland.

Here is an account of one bit of Americanese. An American college professor who was abroad during the Civil War, returned at its close, and on the steamer bringing him home he fell into a controversy with an Englishman as to the origin

of the word "skedaddle." The professor declared that no such word existed, and the Englishman insisted that he had heard it used constantly during his visit to this country the previous year. He finally offered to bet a "jolly" good dinner that he was right, and the professor promptly assented. Several times during the remainder of the voyage each gentleman jocularly referred to the feast he was sure he should eat at the other's expense. Scarcely had the professor landed when he heard baggage-men ordering their drivers to skedaddle with their loads, boot-blacks asked him to let them shine his shoes before he skedaddled home, and the word which had sprung into existence in his absence seemed to be in everybody's mouth. The professor paid the wager with good grace, it is said, and probably thereafter was a still wiser man. After trailing through the language for a time this verbal pyrotechnic vanished into the limbo of semi-obsolete words.

The English author of *Alice in Wonderland*, etc., Lewis Carroll (Dr. Dodgson), was the inventor of the "snark" and the "jabberwock," and Miss Caroline Wetherell has given our American children those quaint "jobbernowls," as she calls them. "Jobbernowl" is an obsolete word of old English origin, and means "block-head." In the time of Queen Elizabeth it was freely used. In an old translation of Rabelais' works the word is spelled jobbernol. It is in Webster's and other dictionaries. Miss Weth-

erell merely adopted the old forgotten term because it suited her purpose. She wanted a quaint word to describe some characters in verses she was writing for the children's page of the American Press Association. The characters were wooden marionettes, and, writes Miss Wetherell, "you readily see 'wooden-head,' 'blockhead,' and 'jobbernowl' are the same. The really odd part of it is that no one seems to know that jobbernowl is not a new word, but a very old one that of right has a place in the language."

Henry James, in one of his stories, alludes to the atmosphere of an English country house as *jumpy*. Grace Margaret Gallaher, in her *Vassar Stories*, speaks of a most *loathy* frog, and says that the feeling of anybody who is a good deal in the house is apt to be *fubsy*. A sufferer from the fubsy state should go out-doors, etc. And some things, even at Vassar, we learn from Miss Gallaher, are *borey*.

A bad verbal by-product is like a son who is a failure in life, and so I dislike to "Boswell" this to posterity: "He stood only two *skipometers* from the brink of the abyss," but a dear friend sent it to me with the assurance that he never would do anything like it again. Only as a reminder of his ghastly offense and of his worthy resolution is it included. Another gentleman, who does not wish his name mentioned, suggests *quassid*, as an adjective, meaning shaken, agitated, from *quassare*, to shake. Still another correspondent calls my attention to *lessless*, which is

smaller than least, and, he says, more expressive than less. But it is not a word that bites the mind, so to speak.

The power of words never impresses some persons. They never feel as did Mrs. Gilchrist when she wrote of Whitman's poems: "I had not dreamed that words could cease to be words and become electric streams like these." Such persons are not likely to appreciate the *mot juste* nor to know what bit of slang is *de trop* in polite conversation. With them all words are equal. They know not what words have the cachet of good literary usage nor what words are under literary ban. They do not perceive that language has an *aura*, like an individual.

There is no philologic sleuthery cunning enough to trace all the mysterious survivals of our speech, but the day is near when men will know much more about the English language than is known now. In volumes new and old, besides reference books, there are many examples of Americanese. In them, too, may be found still-born words—seen in one author's book and nowhere else. As has been said, the illicit and ineligible words soon find their way into the Potter's Field of language—"unwept, unhonored, and unsung." Others, repudiated by everybody else, linger in the mind perhaps of him who is—

"Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth."

Some writers make up Americanese merely to

give a facetious turn to their ideas. Thus Elbert Hubbard: "Whoever saw an angel with pants?" asked the quibbling critic as he stood before one of Mr. Samuel Warner's art creations. 'Whoever saw an angel without pants?' replied Sammy, and thus did Sammy place the *kibosh* upon the astute visitor."

James L. Ford, the inventor and sole patentee of *culturine*, describes it "as a substance that bears the same relation to culture that velveteen does to velvet, oleomargarin to butter, or plush to sealskin. Like all imitations, it has a distinct reason for existence, and in a certain limited sense may be likened to a mixture of a large amount of cotton with a small percentage of silk, the latter appearing on the outside of the fabric in the form of a very thin and very shiny gloss.

"Culturine may be had in various forms, the most popular of which, perhaps, are *artine*, *prosaline*, and *versalene*. There are, of course, other special varieties, but those I have named may be obtained from almost any one engaged in the business. . . . Artine is simply nothing more nor less than information, both accurate and inaccurate, regarding modern and classic art, put up in small capsules, and sold in boxes containing one dozen each."

Now compare the foregoing with the following masterly definition of Ruskin's, and perhaps we shall see what Americanese is not: "What do you think the beautiful word 'wife' comes from? It is the great word in which the English and

Latin languages conquer the French or Greek. I hope the French will some day get a word for it instead of their *femme*. But what do you think it comes from? The great value of the Saxon words is that they mean something. 'Wife' means weaver. You must be either house-wives or house-moths, remember that. In the deep sense you must either weave mens' fortunes and embroider them, or feed upon them, and bring them to decay. Wherever a true wife comes, home is always around her. The stars may be overhead, the glow-worm in the night's cold grass may be the fire at her feet ; but home is where she is, and for a noble woman it stretches far around her better than houses ceiled with cedar or painted with vermilion, shedding its quiet light for those who are homeless. This, I believe, is the woman's true place and power."

CHAPTER XII.

SOME VERBAL CURIOS.

NOT long ago the London *Academy* offered prizes for four new words, and the competition brought out some amusing results. One of the words suggested was *penandincompoop*, a term for a stupid, silly writer. Another was *incompoop*—an income-tax collector. As this word contains a cockney pun it may become popular among a certain class. Still another was *snumble*, to signify a child's effort to express the sensation felt in the nostrils when one drinks an effervescing mineral water. Perhaps the most successful example was *bluedomer*—that is, one who declines to go to church because of his ability to worship God more easily under the blue dome of heaven. The word *roofer* is defined as a letter written after staying with a friend to express your gratitude for his hospitality. Other new words submitted to the *Academy* were :

Crotion—an occurrence which enables you "to crow" over another person. It is the noun corresponding to Mr. Kipling's interjections, "gloats" and "fids."

Balmyanns—originally "baby," for Parmesan

biscuits, and hence any treasure-trove between meals.

Glug—a greasy mud peculiar to the streets of large cities.

Gluxy—an adjective denoting the quality that is not quite oily or creamy or glutinous, but suggestive of each.

Conflumtion—catastrophe.

Quinnydingles—irrelevancies and trivialities.

Screel—the sensation produced by hearing a knife-edge squeal on a slate.

Serungle—the noise made by a slate pencil squeaked on a slate.

Twink—a testy person full of kinks and cranks.

Tilge—decoction of tea which has stood too long, whether warm or cold. (Evidently suggested by bilge water, as in the bottom of a boat.)

Sinequanonymous—most essential.

Whifflement—object of small importance.

Flopuilent—the method of sitting or reclining of one's adipose aunt.

Before our late difficulty with Spain was ended an enterprising individual started on a lecture tour, giving what he barbarously called a *war-ologue*. The moving picture machine, according to various modifications, has been called the *cinematograph* or *kinematograph*, the *mutoscope*, the *vitascopes*, the *biograph*, etc.

One of the most ludicrous word-coiners I ever knew was an eccentric character who lived in the Catskills. He died years ago. His favorite tipple was hard cider, and when "mellowed" by

this insidious beverage, he was wont to indulge in some wonderful monologues. One day he met Doctor Green, to whom he said: "Doc, I've got a complaint you can't cure." "What is it?" asked the unsuspecting old physician. "Well," drawled "Lon," a cider leer in his eyes, "I was taken last night with the inflammation of the dwadlum, operating very extensively on the crisis of the revenue of the revellee of the incongongælix."

The doctor dryly admitted that he knew of no remedy for that malady, and "Lon" was so elated at having "stumped" Doctor Green that he told the incident on every possible occasion, now and then varying the jargon according to his mood.

Americaphiles and *Americaphobes* were introduced by Julian Ralph in an article published in *Harper's Magazine*. They are not happy expressions, though I notice that other writers have used them.

Charles Reade's manipulation of the English language was erratic, to say the least. In *Readiana* he described a gentleman giving a luncheon to two ladies at a railway restaurant as follows: "He souped them, he tough-chickened them, he brandied and cochinealed one, and he brandied and burnt-sugared the other" (brandy and cochineal and brandy and burnt sugar being Reade's euphemisms for port and sherry respectively). In *Christie Johnson*, anent the complexion of the Newhaven fishwives, he says: "It is a race of women that the Northern sun peachifies

instead of rosewoodizing.” “They showed napes,” is the way he indicated that two persons in a fit of temper turned their backs on each other. This phrase occurs in *A Simpleton*.

Abnormally long words may be included under the heading of this chapter. Determining to frame a word which would be readily intelligible to all who understand the Flemish language and who had never seen a “horseless carriage,” the members of the Flemish Academy of Anvers, after much deep thought, evolved the following word: *Snelpaardelooszonderspoorwegpetrolrijtuig*. This euphonious (?) word signifies “a carriage which is worked by means of petroleum, which travels fast, which has no horses, and which is not run on rails.” A New York newspaper, commenting on it, said: “This is, from one point of view, a fine example of *multum in parvo*, but it may be questioned whether one extraordinarily long word is preferable to half a dozen short ones. The Flemish people, however, think differently, and the Academicians of Anvers have been highly complimented by them on their linguistic skill as seen in this unique word.”

In Jeremy Bentham’s *Abridged Petition for Justice* (1829, p. 18) occurs the nine-syllabled word *disintellectualization*. Jeremy Bentham was the man who defined the whole of a good style to lie in the choice of “the same word for the same thing and a different word for a different thing.” Ehew!

A word of twenty-two letters—viz., *incircum-*

scriptibleness—was used by one Byfield, an English divine, in a treatise on Colossians, published in 1615. In the biography of Dr. Benson is an entry from the Archbishop's diary to the effect that "the Free Kirk of the North of Scotland are strong antidisestablishmentarians"—twenty-six letters. In keeping with his rather ponderous language in general William E. Gladstone coined the word *disestablishmentarianism*. Referring to *Love's Labor's Lost* (act v., sc. i. l. 44) we find: *Costard*—"Oh, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words. I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word; for thou art not so long by the head as honorificabilitudinitatibus; thou art easier swallowed than a flap-dragon." This word contains twenty-seven letters. "Thus," says the *Literary Digest*, "Shakespeare, as usual, stands at the top." But the editor will find sanctioned in the Standard Dictionary the twenty-eight-lettered word, antitranssubstantiationist.

The German language is singularly well adapted for the formation of compound words, which the English language is not (see p. 225), and hence big words in German are quite beyond rivalry. For instance, there is the word Constantinopolitanischerdudelsackspfeifenmacherge-sellschaft (59 letters), meaning "an association of Constantinopolitan bagpipe makers." A German-American fearlessly—and correctly—announces that this word, when properly written, has seven additional letters. But there is a word of 71 letters, attributed to Bismarck, and if it be, as some

one has put it, "a worthy offspring of a mighty brain," it is also much more than a proper mouthful. Bismarck disliked everything foreign, especially everything French, and the word "apotheker" provoked his disapproval as having a foreign, though certainly not a French, kinship. As a substitute, so the story goes, he proposed a truly German word, defining an apothecary. Here it is: Gesundheitswiederherstellungsmittel-zusammenmischungsverhältnisskundiger.

Speaking of sesquipedalian words, on page 837 of Liddell and Scott's *Greek Lexicon* may be found a Greek word with 176 letters. It is from one of the old plays and means "hash."

Unlike his remote predecessor, Frederick the Great, Wilhelm II. is averse to French words in the German language, and he has made several attempts to have substituted for them German or Germanized words. The first published imperial order of the year 1899 was entitled "Germanization of Certain Foreign Expressions," and began as follows: "With a view of furthering the purity of language in my army, I give orders, in consequence of a report that has been made to me, that while paying full regard to traditions, from to-day the following expressions are to be replaced by the German words written opposite to them." Then followed a list of titles and expressions to be changed. A more recent order of Emperor Wilhelm is to substitute English for French in the higher classes of the upper schools or gymnasias. In the lower classes it is to be

made equal with Greek. The political meaning of this decree may become historic. Germany is reaching out in the commercial affairs of the world, and the Emperor, whether by advice or his own discernment, sees that in order to cope with the Anglo-Saxon race and to diminish the odds against his own, the latter must know the English language.

The words of command are no longer given in French, and all drill words, names of accoutrements, etc., of French extraction have been abolished by the Germans. Wilhelm's patriotism is somewhat truculent, but who can blame him for loving his own land and his own language? It is very natural that he should wish to redeem his mother tongue from the badge of servitude which the French in particular had set upon it. Prince Bismarck, too, insisted that it was the supremest folly to think of abolishing the "bearded type." The German script, however, has been a thing of barbaric mystery to foreign eyes these many years, and set spectacles on every other German nose throughout the Fatherland. Charles V. loathed the German language. He called it "the language of horses"; but then it should be remembered that Charles was more of a Spaniard than a German. When Napoleon, by changing the date of the annexation of Corsica to France, made himself a Frenchman, he took a terrible dislike to the Italian language and showed his intense disgust if any deputation addressed him in that language.

The present Kaiser has a like prejudice against the French language, and when he ascended the throne he had a number of foreign words in every department abolished and replaced by German terms. He eliminated all Gallicisms from the imperial bills of fare, even insisting on having *Speisenfolge* in place of menu.

The Emperor also issued an edict making it obligatory on his subjects to be very careful in their pick of words when speaking of the married fair sex. A general's wife must be alluded to as consort (*Gemahlin*); a woman whose husband is high in the civil service must be called spouse (*Gattin*); she who belongs to the bourgeoisie is her husband's lady (*Frau*); while the working-man's helpmate is just a plain wife (*Weib*). Anent these amenities an American journal remarks: "The peculiarity of this mathematic distinction is that, in the nature of things, it cannot be applied to speaking to the consorts, spouses, ladies, or wives directly. It is a law for the recognition of the social prestige of the absent—the very refinement of politeness."

Julian Hawthorne writes me: "I have Worcester, Webster, the Century, and the Standard dictionaries, and have not yet finished using the words therein collected; so I believe I have not begun manufacturing on my own account. A dozen years ago, however, I seem to have perpetrated the inclosed, which is at your service, though I fear not in your line."

The inclosure Mr. Hawthorne alludes to is a

clipping from *The Bookmart* (now defunct) of August, 1887, headed "The Story of Alphonso," the subtitle being "A Romance." It is a grotesque piece of nonsense, too long to quote, but under an original verbal symbolism is veiled a certain prophetic element of a more or less personal tendency. His first chapter is headed *The Dinkunabulum*, and the author sets one agog by such terms as *catastrified*, *imposthumed*, *bulgaroons*, *billiwinking*, *golliwombles*, *purkle*, *squinly*, *stimpered*, *gattlegreens*, *brolliant*, *stither-and-spin*, *begraffed*, *fumor*, *raddled*, *invector*, *membrenate*, *murid*, *pidget*, *morpid*, *ravid*, *greeces*, *floughs*, *sprangle*, *gallowed*, *bilbo*, "his breek was jostled," "his wizand was up," "crockles along," "twiddling moonbeams," "he moddled his face," "froddled forward," etc. What most of them mean cannot be learned from the context and only Mr. Hawthorne knows, if he remembers.

CHAPTER XIII.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.

ONE of my correspondents thinks that we English-speaking people know a good thing when we see it, and hence our avidity in seizing upon and making our own any foreign word of which we really believe we stand in need.

"We don't care where it comes from. The only question with us is: Will it serve our purpose better than any word we now have in our vocabulary? In this way we have succeeded in making the English tongue the language of the world, rich, flexible, and adapted to all peoples and all climes. Look at the long list of foreign words we have made our own during the half century just passed. No, we have no desire to 'purify' our beloved English tongue by striking out foreign words from it. On the contrary, we are in favor of enriching it from year to year until it overshadows the other tongues of the world, even as the towering oak overshadows the humble children of the plain. God bless the English tongue! May it live long and prosper!"

To which I say amen! But, fortunately, we do not all think alike as to the value of for-

eign words for our own use. Indeed, there has been much wrangling on the subject. For my own part, I think the more words are taken from the Latin and Greek the more artificial and flabby our language becomes, and the most tedious writing in English is usually that which contains a preponderance of words derived from those dead languages.

There is a kind of writing which, as a fine art, *belles lettres*, may be called analogous to painting, and the fact of this resemblance is expressed by the commonly applied term "word-painting." Another kind of writing finds its analogy in music, by reason of the rhythmic flow of the sentences whose very sound helps the meaning and in which a varied tonality may suggest the whole gamut of melody such as Ruskin's, up to the richest diapason, such as Milton's. For such kinds of writing many foreign prototypes or derivatives, in default of anything so expressive in our own language, are quite indispensable.

In an address at Oxford Frederic Harrison offered this sterling advice: "I do not say stick to Saxon words and avoid Latin words as a law of language, because English now consists of both; good and plain English prose needs both. We seldom get the highest poetry without a large use of Saxon, and we hardly reach precise and elaborate explanation without Latin terms. . . . Current English prose—not the language of poetry or of prayer—must be of both kinds, Saxon and Latin. But wherever a Saxon word

is enough, use it; because if you have all the fulness and the precision you need, it is the more simple, the more direct, the more homely."

Probably not more than a third of the words in the vocabulary are Saxon derivatives, and the reason why there are not more is because didactic English writers and theologians have cast their ideas in classic molds—put new wine in old bottles. Hence many are the instances which indicate the lingual demarcation of English from the original Teutonic branch or from the German language of to-day. Even in the grammar itself, supposed to be wholly Teutonic, a striking differentiation is seen, and this is owing to the countless efforts to Latinize our grammar. Yet the vital, formative principle of our language is Anglo-Saxon. Says Richard Grant White: "If what has come to us through the Normans, and since their time from France and Italy and the Latin lexicon, were turned out of our vocabulary, we could live, and love, and work, and talk, and sing, and have a folk-lore and a higher literature. But take out the former, the movement of our lives would be clogged, and the language would fall to pieces for lack of framework and foundation." And he says it may be doubted "whether out of the simples of our ancient English, or Anglo-Saxon, so called, we might not have formed a language copious enough for all the needs of the highest civilization, and subtle enough for all the requisitions of philosophy."

George Perkins Marsh advanced much the

same idea. Borrowing so freely from other tongues has brought its penalties. Though we have rifled the whole *orbis verborum*, “these foreign conquests, indeed, have not been won . . . without some shedding of Saxon blood—some sacrifice of domestic coin; and if we have gained largely in vocabulary, we have, for the time at least, lost no small portion of that original constructive power whereby we could have fabricated a nomenclature scarcely less wide and diversified than that which we have borrowed from so distant and diversified sources.”

Not only do Anglo-Saxon words, like father and mother, comprise the vocabulary of common life, but also the language of the emotions—fear, sorrow, love, hope, hate, shame, and the like. The history of most languages shows the conscious will first in the foreground, while the understanding comes to its own at a later date. Anglo-Saxon “has given names to most of those objects which are associated with our strongest feelings—as home, hearth, fireside, life, death, sickness: and claims the words of childhood and youth, which for all after-life have the deepest meaning and are surrounded by the most moving associations.” The proportion of Anglo-Saxon words in the authorized version of the English Bible, rightly considered the noblest body of English prose which the language possesses, is greater than in any other English book.

From the Latin are derived the general and abstract terms, while the Anglo-Saxon furnishes

those which are special and definite. In an essay Henry Rogers has illustrated this in the following way: "‘Move’ and ‘motion’ are general terms of Latin origin; but all the special terms for expressing varieties of motion are Anglo-Saxon, as ‘run,’ ‘walk,’ ‘leap,’ ‘stagger,’ ‘slip,’ ‘step,’ ‘slide.’ Color is Latin, but white, black, green,¹ yellow, blue, red, brown, are Anglo-Saxon. ‘Crime’ is Latin, but ‘murder,’ ‘theft,’ ‘robbery,’ ‘to lie,’ ‘to steal,’ are Anglo-Saxon. ‘Member’ and ‘organ’ as applied to the body are Latin or Greek, but ‘ear,’ ‘eye,’ ‘hand,’ ‘foot,’ ‘lip,’ ‘mouth,’ ‘teeth,’ ‘hair,’ ‘finger,’ ‘nostril’ are Anglo-Saxon. ‘Animal’ is Latin, but ‘man,’ ‘horse,’ ‘cow,’ ‘sheep,’ ‘dog,’ ‘calf,’ ‘goat,’ are Anglo-Saxon. ‘Number’ is Latin, but all our cardinal and ordinal numbers as far as a million are Anglo-Saxon."

Many words of Latin origin, however, are equally as simple and perspicuous as those of Anglo-Saxon origin, and they should not be avoided merely because they bear the mint-mark of Latinity. But as between a Latin word and an Anglo-Saxon word, when both are equally clear and intelligible, preference should be given to the latter.

I verily believe that a writer's mental weariness and discouragement often come from the habit of straining for effects by using big words of Latin extraction. His diction loses spirit and

¹ Strangely enough, the Homeric Greeks had no expression for green.

grows languid and ponderous when he ceases to use the brisk, glowing, bracing, biting Anglo-Saxon words. He perhaps attributes his failure to produce something effective to a flagging fancy, when in truth his fancy is still up to its pristine mark, but has been embodied in pale and bloodless derivatives. Perhaps his style is more debilitated than his ideas, though they too must be enfeebled by confinement in such a verbal prison. If he finds his work blessed with the Latin merits of euphony, sonorousness, and harmony, but otherwise weak and banal, let him come back to his mother tongue and draw on it for that strength, tenderness, and simplicity which makes English literature the crowning glory of all the works of man. Let him learn there is no finer literary bread than is made of English wheat.

The original Anglo-Saxon, like the Greek and the modern German, had the power of composition in a great degree, but its coalition with the Norman-French and the influence of the latter so weakened this power that it began to decay in the early English period. And now, less than any other language in the Teutonic family, is the English adapted for new compounds. In the power of composition the Latin was always very deficient, and the same peculiarity is shown by the languages which have been derived from it. Several reasons account for the modern German influence in our language, especially in making compounds, which, to say the least, are usually no ornament to it. De Mille has stated these

reasons as follows: "German philosophy has a commanding position and is illustrated by several schools, each of which has its own nomenclature made up out of German words; and English thinkers who discuss philosophical subjects are forced to transfer German compounds to their own language.

"These words in many cases have roots which also exist in English. In the case of scientific writing every liberty must be allowed: and as the botanist may freely make use of Greek words, so the metaphysician may employ German. But in general literature the case is different, and English imitations of German compounds are to be condemned." Among the objectionable compounds De Mille includes such words as "time-spirit," "earth-soul," "hero-saint," "wonder-smith," "life-pleasure," "youth-season." As a rule, a compound which can be written without a hyphen is better formed than one which requires it. Words come from the Greek and Latin already compounded, but words that exist in the language are often compounded with sad results. For instance, Hon. Charles Francis Adams, a polished scholar, made the execrable compound, "filiopietistic."

Certainly it would be unwise to leave the future growth of the English language to chance, and it is equally clear that its abuses cannot be corrected by legal measures. Jacques-George Danton said: "One had better be a poor fisherman than meddle with the art of governing

men." So I say one might better be deaf when bad grammar or other solecisms are spoken than try to regulate language by legislation. Radical changes of any kind cannot be made in a day. Was it not Macchiavelli who said: "God will not do everything at once." Literary taste and critical scholarship may be safeguards against the permanent usage of unfit words, but, as Archer says, "the fact is that three-fourths of the English language would crumble away before a purist, and we should be left without words to express the commonest and most necessary ideas."

Joseph Joubert maintained that it is a good plan to use words in their popular rather than in their philosophic sense, and a still better plan to use them in their natural or essential than in their popular sense. "To prove a thing by definition," he says, "proves nothing if the definition is purely philosophical; for such definitions only bind him who makes them." An illustration of this is afforded in a criticism by Professor Hyslop, in the *North American Review*, of the recent book, *From India to the Planet Mars*. Professor Hyslop thinks that M. Flournoy puts a peculiar meaning on the term supernormal. "He speaks as if it were convertible with supernatural. He considers these processes (of clairvoyance) as perfectly natural, and in the case of telepathy speaks of it as something rather to be expected than doubted. You would suppose that the 'supernormal' sustained the same relation to the normal that hyperæsthesia sustains to æsthe-

sia ; but no, it is made equivalent to the supernatural, and this assumption annihilates all rational perspective in the case," which is that of the famous spiritist medium, "Mlle. Smith," of Geneva, Switzerland.

"But to prove a thing by definition," goes on Joubert (in Matthew Arnold's translation), "when the definition expresses the necessary, inevitable, and clear idea which the world at large attaches to the object, is, on the contrary, all in all ; because then what one does is simply to show people what they do really think, in spite of themselves and without knowing it. The rule that one is free to give to words what sense one will, and that the only thing needful is to be agreed upon the sense one gives them, is very well for the mere purposes of argumentation ; but in the genuine world of literature it is good for nothing."

Bacon believed that the Elizabethan language would become obsolete. Perhaps he fondly dreamed of a time when the English language would be entirely Latinized. However that may be, if we accept orthodox history, it was the sturdy and intense individualism of the Saxons which enabled them to overcome the more or less communistic Britons and Angles and Danes, and finally the Normans.

The greatest reaction against the dead languages ever seen in this country is shown to-day ; and this prejudice is growing, even among college-bred men. Why is it ? In literature the English language is richest of all languages, and

it is superior to any other, except in the matter of precision. A complete study of etymology and philology should, no doubt, include the Greek and Latin languages, but for knowledge and as means of discipline the value of these languages has been and is still much overestimated. Of late years, however, the study of Greek has steadily declined. Look over the college curricula and you will see how many provide elective studies in place of Greek. Fifty years ago the idea of a liberal education made the study of Greek compulsory. It is generally conceded among scholars to be a model, an ideal, language, vastly superior to Latin, two serious faults in the latter being the lack of the article and of a distinction between the preterit and the aorist tenses. But Greek seems to have had its day.

There is much truth in Herbert Spencer's remark that "if we inquire what is the real motive for giving boys a classical education we find it to be simply conformity to public custom." Certainly English etymology is not acquired by mastering the vocabulary of Homer and Horace, or learning by rote the conjugation of *tupto* and *amo*.

The English language has no better friend to-day than Thomas J. Allen, President of Aurora College, who has made some observations, not less fair than candid, relating to classic learning. He maintains that for all but the 1 per cent. of college students who will become specialists, the

study of three or four languages concurrently is a shameful waste of time and energy. "The study of the classics," says Professor Allen, "exercises little more than the verbal memory. That the study of Latin and Greek is the best means of acquiring a good English style is pure presumption. A knowledge of Anglo-Saxon is of more value for this end than a knowledge of Latin. Notwithstanding the attempts of grammarians to Latinize our grammar, English remains an uninflected, almost a grammarless¹ tongue, to be acquired more by practice than by rule. A knowledge of original meaning is not a safe guide to present use; the history of a word and its present use are more important than its original signification. Common observation, as well as literary history, shows that there is little relation between ability to write pure English and knowledge of the classics. 'Every language,' says Macaulay, 'throws light on every other.' We acknowledge, too, that the great body of our educated countrymen learn to grammatize their English by means of their Latin. This, however, proves, not the usefulness of their Latin, but the folly of their instructors. . . . Not more than 5 per cent. of those who translate from Horace or Homer have the time or inclination to do more than, by the help of lexicon and paradigm, to render a pass-

¹This fact is ably and amply demonstrated by Richard Grant White in *Words and Their Uses* and in *Every-Day English*.

able translation; and of that 5, not 1 per cent. would, five years after graduation, choose to read the original in preference to a translation. Not only because there are in English better translations of the classics than the ordinary student could, at great loss of time and energy, make for himself, but because our own language contains a greater literature than the ancient classics, is it necessary to devote much time to Greek and Latin?"

Having carefully measured and examined the shallows of American culture, Professor Mark H. Liddell not only succinctly outlines the defects in our educational methods and ideals, but proposes a humanistic way of meeting the new conditions and needs of the twentieth century. Some of his views tally with those of Professor Allen, as where he says: "Modern science has entirely overthrown this notion of the ideal perfection of Latin and Greek as means of expression, and modern life is beginning to demand more economy in the expenditure of educational time than is illustrated by a five years' propædæutic for the mastery of a dead language."

What Professor Liddell very sensibly brings to our notice is the necessity for a national culture whose literary elements, if they are to harmonize with our science, "must be such as are closely allied to our national experience, our national life, and national habits of thought. And if literature is to be used as machinery of culture, we must found our culture upon the study of our

own literature." Then he points out a deeper reason why our culture should be national, by showing that a national speech is much more than a means of general communication and a vehicle of expression; it is a way of looking at life and is the embodiment of a national experience. He truly says there is "a heredity in speech" and that "we think in inherited idiom even after we learn to translate our thought into foreign words. . . . To seek culture in a foreign speech before mastering the native one is only to exchange natural for artificial limitations, which, as it cannot understand their nature, only confuse and embarrass the mind's thinking processes."

We now seem to be putting the cart before the horse in pursuing classic studies and really neglecting our own living speech. Sir Robert Ball is one of many men who desire to see "such a reform of the educational systems as shall give to science its true position. Too much importance is at present given to the study of languages." But there is one good thing about it—the Greek and Latin vocabularies will be drained dry after a time, if the scientists, the parsons, and especially the doctors, keep drawing on them as they have been doing for centuries. Then we may come to our senses, throw overboard a lot of our useless and damaged cargo, and, to mix the metaphor a little more, begin excavating on our own historic premises. All this may happen some time before the close of the present century, when

the Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage predicts that *healthology* will be complete and universal.

By a happy coincidence English was made the official language of the kingdom of Great Britain about the time Geoffrey Chaucer began to write, and perhaps for this reason it was once the fashion erroneously to style him the "Father of English Poetry." To a large extent his vocabulary and grammar had become obsolete at the time the Bard of Avon was wooing Melpomene and Thalia. I have often wondered whether Shakespeare would have been a greater writer if he could have had command of an English vocabulary as copious as our present one. Perhaps, by the use of our modern words he might have been a more accomplished, but not a stronger, writer ; for he had a good stock of Anglo-Saxon words at hand, and, to paraphrase from Story :

Now clear, pure, hard, bright, and one by one like to
hailstones,
Short words fell from his pen fast as the first of a
shower.

Back of Shakespeare's perfection of art was his unexampled genius as a psychologist. In the words of Lewis W. Smith : "No one talks or ever did talk such noble poetry as Portia's speech in the trial scene or Hamlet's soliloquy. All the finer passages in the great dramatist, all the more perfect presentations of passion, transcend the realities of human speech ; but as a more complete expression of feeling than is actually pos-

sible we accept them with unquestioning faith in their fidelity to the enduring facts of life."

When driven to mental bay, Shakespeare invented his own verbal means of extricating himself. His pithy phrases and terse expressions have never been surpassed, and yet he used only 15,000 different words, and the great Milton used but 8000. But did you ever stop to think that the only dictionary of the English language at the time of Shakespeare's death contained just 5080 words, and that in Milton's day the language had been enriched, according to the best dictionary, to only 13,000 words? Who dares to estimate how many words Shakespeare would use if he lived in these days, when the number of dictionary words exceeds 300,000? Countless men of modern times have used more words than did Shakespeare and Milton together.

For the ordinary needs of cultivated intercourse from 3000 to 5000 words are necessary, says Whitney, in his *Life and Growth of Language*. Both he and Preyer state that a vocabulary of from 25,000 to 30,000 words is not unusual among well-educated persons. When Professor Whitney made that statement he estimated the whole number of words in the language at 100,000. When he put forth the *Century Dictionary*, a few years later, he found about 225,000.

Professor E. S. Holden tested himself by a reference to all the words in Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary*, and found that 33,456 words comprised his own vocabulary, which doubtless

would have proved much larger had he been able to consult the more recent Century or Standard dictionaries, not then published. Mr. Edwin W. Doran, of Clinton, Mo., says an unusually talkative parrot of his acquaintance had a vocabulary of fifty-nine words, several of which he heard it use very fluently. It could, no doubt, speak many more, and it seemed to understand the meaning of those used. It spoke Spanish, French, and English.

Mr. Doran, who is an earnest investigator in educational matters, concludes a magazine article as follows: "If a word is the sign of an idea, as we have been taught, the person knowing the most words—other things being equal—will have the most ideas. We think only in words, and the man who has the most words ought to have the most thoughts. A man without clear definitions of words will likely be without clear ideas. Hence both clear thinking and clear expression of thought depend upon the extent and accuracy of one's vocabulary." This author advises the habit of reading with a standard dictionary at one's elbow. When new words are met, they should be mastered as to definition, and then fixed in the mind, so that they will be immediately available when there is occasion.

It has been estimated that there are 860 distinct languages and about 5000 dialects spoken by peoples now living in the world. Of the various languages, 89 are allotted to Europe, 123 to Asia, 114 to Africa, 117 to America, and 417

to the islands of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Plutarch says that Cleopatra "spoke most languages," and that she seldom needed an interpreter when she gave audiences to foreign ambassadors, but Plutarch's veracity is somewhat elastic. At all events, if Cleopatra was anything like her sisters of to-day, it is safe to believe that she always had "the last word."

With all these languages is it not surprising what dense ignorance there is, even in civilized countries? Take Russia: there you find, in the two capitals themselves, a curious detail. Says a writer in *Scribner's Magazine*: "All the shops which offer wares to the people do so, not in words, as with us, but with pictures. The provision merchant's shop is a veritable picture-gallery of sausages and cheeses and bread and butter and hams and everything eatable. The ironmonger hangs out illustrations of knives and forks and scissors and chisels and foot-rules, and the like. The tailor shows paintings of coats and trousers. Why is this? Simply because a majority of potential customers cannot read. . . . The Russian people, then, is illiterate, in the strict sense of the word."

About 60 per cent. of the Russian people can neither read nor write, and those who can write have to be very discreet if they would escape the vengeance of the public censor and the secret police—ever on the watch for "free thinkers," who are regarded as no better than enemies of the Great White Tsar's government. It was less

than a century ago that the Russian language attained its full development, chiefly through the genius of the two great poets, Pushkin and Lermontoff, who hold the same rank in Russian as do their contemporaries, Goethe and Schiller, in German literature. But there still remain philologic snags in the Russian language which preclude a broad range of expression, and, all things considered, it is not surprising that the wretched serfs and peasants of that country are not savants.

The final stage in the rational development of language is intelligent, conscious construction. But who is to do it? Who is to overhaul the language, strike out objectionable forms, correct inappropriate expressions, and supply deficiencies? Language grows and changes by natural processes of evolution, despite the dicta of grammarians and rhetoricians. Can its development and use as an instrument of expression be controlled by legislation like law, the instrument of justice?

Shades of our forefathers, no! It would be setting an appalling precedent for Congress to attempt to amend English spelling or to simplify English grammar, not to mention the pitiful results of such tinkering. It is not within the scope of legislative tribunals to tamper with a language which is largely the product of intuitive reason and of agencies entirely outside the pale of civic or other authority. In the world to-day there are two currents which flow together in places, part in others, and again run counter.

The tendency of art, literature, theology, and government is to complicate the general understanding of elementary laws. On the other hand, there is a utilitarian influence in civilization which tends not only to level social conditions, but to clarify philosophy, to modernize the processes of culture, and to specialize the functions of human labor and activity. What seem to us complexities are mainly the result of combination of a few simple elements—but a combination that may be incalculable in its power and extent. We have modern science to thank for lifting the cloud of mystery and ignorance which once shut out from the vision of mankind many truths of nature and of life. But her mission is not half attained; her finest miracles are yet to come. She sometimes discovers the secrets of natural law in a blind, clumsy way, but her final results are sure and clear. As the aim of the inventor is to make his device as simple in construction as possible, so the ultimate aim of science must be to bring order out of chaos, and, while deepening the channels of knowledge, now littered with linguistic wrecks, to let into them pellucid streams of thought which shall sweep away all verbal derelicts that should have been in the Saragossa Sea of language long ago.

White insists, more than once and with the most forcible proofs, that the misuse of language cannot be justified by ever so good authority; that a new word may be good English not because a great writer uses it, but “because its meaning

is clear and its formation normal." Such words come at once "by intuition to men who are masterful in language, or ready and true in its apprehension." He declares that "Neologism is not reprehensible if the deviation from precedent is in the line of normal movement; which is a very different matter, for instance, from the substitution of one part of speech for another."

Again he says: "If there are to be no new words, how can language express more than the first and lowest needs of human nature? Without neologism language could not grow, could not conform itself to the new needs of new generations. . . . But one parent of language must be precedent. The language of one generation brings forth the language of the next as surely as the women of one generation bring forth the men of the next. Hence, indeed, the language spoken by a people is its mother tongue. . . . If we make the use of eminent writers and cultivated speakers authoritative, we shall soon find ourselves involved in a conflict not only of use with reason, and of use with precedent, but of use with itself."

Professor Bréal recognizes the diverse aspects of this question of neologism in saying: "To condemn neologism in principle and absolutely would be the most annoying and the most useless of prohibitions. Each onward step of a language is the work first of an individual, then of a more or less large minority. A country in which innovations were forbidden would deprive its lan-

guage of all chance of development. By neologism we must understand the bestowal of a new meaning on an old word, as well as the introduction of a wholly new vocable. Just as the change which modifies pronunciation is at once imperceptible and constant, to such a degree that a stranger who returns to a country after thirty years of absence can appreciate the march of time, *so also is the meaning of words being ceaselessly transformed by the action of events, new discoveries, of revolutions in ideas and in customs.* A contemporary of Lamartine would find it difficult to understand the language of modern French newspapers. We all work more or less at the vocabulary of the future, whether we are scholars or unlettered, writers or artists, men of society or men of the people. Children have a part in it which is by no means small; as they take up the language at the point to which the preceding generations have brought it, they generally are ten or twenty years in advance of their parents. The limit at which the right of innovation ceases is not determined by the idea of purity alone, which can always be disputed; it is also imposed by the need which we feel of remaining in contact with the minds of those who have gone before."

Doubtless the English language, like the French, is eccentric, illogical, and unsystematic in some of its spelling. As a rural friend of mine says, "there's too much of it." Revision and reform in our orthography are alleged to be cry-

ing needs, and, except for the difficulty of introducing it, many people claim there is no valid objection to phonetic spelling—not even the etymologic objection, for etymology as a study, they say, would be of no value if there were a changeless orthography.

The American Philological Association is the strongest supporter in this country of the spelling-reform movement. Its members contend that the irregular spelling of the English language is a great hindrance to the progress of the education of those speaking it and to its spread among other nations; that it involves a waste of millions of dollars, for each generation, for teachers and for writing and printing superfluous letters, and, most grievous of all, that it actually causes a loss of two years of the school time of each child, and is mainly the cause of the alarming illiteracy of our people. These reformers are now trying to get a bill, in one form or another, through Congress to do away with letters that are not sounded, their aim being, for one thing, to influence publishers and printers generally to use the soft “g” for the sound of “j” in all cases. They are urging the adoption of gradual amendments, mainly the dropping of silent letters—especially of the final “e” and the change of “ed” to “t” in preterits and past participles. They claim there is an inconsistency in using so lumbering a mass of letters as occur in “called” and “stepped” for the sake of designating sounds exactly analogous to those expressed by “bald” and “wept.”

Professor Francis H. March, who is at the head of this spelling-reform movement, says: "It requires a special adjustment of the vocal cords to utter 'd' a sonant after a surd, and to neglect the adjustment turns 'd' into a 't,' as in blest, past, curst, for the unpronounceable bled, pasd, cursd." No one should grumble at such changes or because the preterits of our regular verbs are two syllables shorter than they were in the time of Wyclif.

Various odd phrases and forms of expression have passed or are passing out of use, "because of a perception that they are at variance with reason." Among these are the double negatives and double superlatives, universally used by Anglo-Saxon and early English speakers and writers up to about the beginning of the seventeenth century; also the separation of the limiting adjective from the word which it modifies, etc. These changes, including the lopping off of nearly all the Anglo-Saxon inflections, are due chiefly to the logical exactions of modern thought.

But some of the changes proposed by this association are rather complex, for with every rule formulated is an exception or two. It may be questioned whether cluttering a reform system of spelling with exceptions would not be as troublesome as is our present bad spelling; whether the remedies would not be worse than the disease. Then, too, imagine the average member of Congress passing his erudite opinion upon such matters. "Laws are enforced by penalties, because

the violation of law is injurious to society ; but penalties for breach of etiquette, of fashion, and of correct language are unnecessary" (Allen).

The chief difficulty with these suggestions of the Spelling Reform Association is that they are only half-way measures, for they do not cover phonetic requirements. Such a makeshift system, owing its authority, though it may, to the dictates of common sense, and that of an unusually acute kind, will not answer in the long run. *The fact is, we need more, not fewer, letters.* We lack an alphabet which represents all the sounds in our language in a simple and uniform manner. The same may be said of the French language, but the incomplete and defective Roman alphabet is managed much more consistently by the French than by the English-speaking people.

Phonetically analyzed, there are forty distinct elementary sounds in English, and only forty distinct letters can completely represent them. It is particularly rich in vowels, and few others of the Indo-European group have such a variety of sounds. Thus it will be seen that the demands of English phonetics are but inadequately met by our present alphabet, and that radical changes, assuming that they are desirable, cannot be made possible until a complete phonetic alphabet is adopted. Each letter of this proposed alphabet must always have a significance and always the same significance.

Says Dr. A. L. Benedict: "A genuine English spelling reform cannot logically stop much short

of the adoption of a unilinear system of writing, analogous to the simple style of several stenographic alphabets now in vogue. . . . Any attempt at spelling reform while retaining the present Roman alphabet must result as unsatisfactorily as the effort to remodel for a big boy a suit of clothes a third too small for him."

Perhaps, for their own uses, the spelling reformers might add to our alphabet fourteen letters to stand for the sounds now not represented by letters, and thus solve the crux that confronts them. This plan would obviate making too abrupt a departure from the Roman alphabet, which, they doubtless will admit, is good enough as far as it goes. But, seriously, slight changes in spelling may be both advisable and possible within the phonetic limits of our present alphabet. But the proposed substitution of "f" for "ph," the dropping of "o" and "a" from ancient diphthongs ending in "e," etc.—these changes violate custom and the history of the words themselves, while they preserve the expedients of silent indicators and arbitrary binominal expressions of single sounds. The same sound, sometimes represented by "f" and sometimes by "ph," is not a matter of accident. The latter originally indicated a difference in pronunciation and almost always marks a derivation from the Greek, "f" being sounded between the lower lip and upper teeth, while the Greek *phi* was blown between the lips. Important changes in the English language are denoted by the peculiarities in our spelling, and

the latter, as recording the source of contributions to our vocabulary, are of value. Dr. Benedict aptly says that by no means without significance are *ps* in pseudo, *æ* in homœopathy and œconomic, *æ* and *rrh* in hæmorrhage, *tion* instead of shun; and is it not less gracious and less logical to find fault because the primitive spelling has not changed to conform to our modern mispronunciation than to complain because the lazy English lips and tongue have slurred their original sounds?

A number of our best writers now drop the Latin syllable *al*, added by false analogy to such Greek adjectives as chemic and microscopic, and the practice may become general. In America we have discarded, except in books to be read by the British, the "u" which our earlier writers insinuated into "labor," "honor," and other similar Latin words. A few peculiarly grotesque errors of spelling may be sloughed off; we may drop the apostrophe and the apology for "tho'"; we may universally write "plow" instead of "plough"; we may prune other words like "catalogue," which carry unmeaning and unwarranted letters. Finally, the spelling reformers may succeed "in mutilating word-images and in destroying linguistic landmarks, but they cannot make two letters out of one or prevent the inevitable confusion of attaching different significations to the same graphic sign" (Benedict). Nor can they contract the life-sphere of the noble old Saxon words.

Questions in English, such as the following, sometimes come up: What is the law and its cause for the change in the vowel sound in the English irregular verb system, while the consonant base remains unchanged? Which vowel changes do we use to express past tense and perfect participle? How many of the prehistoric conjugations are represented in said verb system? Name and trace them. A forthcoming book by Robert W. Haire will throw the search-light on such matters as these.

For many years Mr. Haire has been working on a word-list of the Aryan elements of the English tongue, arranged under the Aryan roots. This monumental work ought to be of very great service to English-speaking people. It is not to be a work of literature, in the accepted sense, but rather an examination of the foundations—in the cellar of our language, so to speak. Yet it will be a compendium for the common school-teacher, who has no time to study Latin, Greek, or Saxon, and to whom the borrowed words from these languages are mere symbols as devoid of meaning as the symbols of algebra.

“One of the great needs of the day, in regard to language, is the purging it of the prurient and pretentious metaphors which have broken out all over it, and the getting plain people to say plain things in a plain way.”¹ If there had been no English and American poets, I dare not think

¹ Richard Grant White.

what our language would be like now. They have kept in use all the simple words, the crisp words, the keen, sharp words, the small words, that mean so much. Most of their rhymes are monosyllabic, the frequent use of short words fortunately being the only earnest of a graceful swing of meter and of a perfect rhythm. Anglo-Saxon primitives, for the most part, have furnished these priceless monosyllables.

The poets have been a wonderful boon to the language. The scientists, the philosophers, the historians, the learned writers, have done ten thousand times more injury to English than the poets. In truth, the poets have done the most to preserve the vigor, the strength, the beauty of the Anglo-Saxon speech, while the ponderous prose pedants have done the most to spoil our language by dragging into it 100,000 Latin derivatives, chiefly to give a tinge of profundity to their writings. They have made the language turgid, roily, unwieldy. Let us study more zealously the history and charms of our own language; let us delve into old English and Saxon fields and their primal wildwood glories.

It is hoped that at no distant day an International Academy will be established, under the direction of representative men of England and America,—not a clique or congress of log-rollers,—whose decisions on disputed questions in language and whose suggestions would be accepted as authoritative. This is the only way in which we ever may expect to raise English to its high-

est plane of excellence, and even such an institution would have its drawbacks.

Surely the English language should not be left to adventitious factors alone. No one expects government or law to grow out of the genius of the people without conscious effort; no more is language capable of developing spontaneously in the right direction. It needs at the helm men as sharp of eye and as unerring of instinct as are the Indian pilots on the St. Lawrence River. Men of higher mental ability and training than professional politicians, men who are as incorruptible as they are scholarly, should have the power to determine what text-books shall be used in the public schools; and an International Academy of Letters is needed, if for no other purpose than to decide between the claims of rival publishers and to weigh the evidence set forth by warring professors and literary critics. Many desirable forms now obsolete should be restored, definite meanings assigned to many words of vague and of disputed signification, new words proposed to supply deficiencies, and other improvements made by a conscious process of construction.

Professor Brander Matthews thinks that "in the good work of injecting more sense into our orthography, as in the other good work of still further simplifying our grammar, we Americans will have to take the lead. It is only by venturing boldly that we can keep our language up to its highest efficiency. It is for us to hand it down to our children fitted for the service it is to

render. It is our duty to help it to draw new life and power from every source, and to urge along the simplification of its grammar and orthography."

But why should we not have the coöperation of our British cousins, Professor Matthews? Are not Anglicisms as objectionable as Americanisms? Why should we favor a purely American English? If English is to become the universal language, let the English-speaking races, whose essential unity was never so marked as now, do all that is judicious to further this great achievement. With its matchless vocabulary and infinite resources, it stands to-day the best chance of winning its way wherever mankind is prepared to choose between it and other civilized tongues.

A more general study of the earlier forms of our language and a revival of some of the short, apt, stanch Anglo-Saxon words used centuries ago, would yield the most beneficial results to the English literature of the future. Our speech should more closely fit our national character and high destiny. We are far removed from the pagan ideals of the Greeks and Romans. The cast of our thought is different from theirs, and if we think through or in words, why should we appropriate their terms, which so often dilute our conceptions? The Latin races, moreover, tend to socialism and anarchy, because they have become weak and dependent. The Anglo-Saxon race, imbued with the spirit and zest of liberty,

is pushing forward, because it is self-reliant and resourceful.

Lord Charles Beresford has shown that the Anglo-Saxon race owns, controls, or dominates nearly three-fourths of the earth's surface and over one-fourth of its population. What other race ever had such a record of supremacy? And what will the Anglo-Saxon race be in the year 2000 A. D. at the same rate of progression? Why, it will own the earth and have a million good words in its vocabulary; and probably some with a little of the old Adam still clinging to them; for, bright as the prospect seems, the next one hundred or the next one thousand years will not mold the Anglo-Saxon into a perfect race or the English into a perfect language.

CONCLUSION.

THE subject of word-coinage is so cumulative that there really is no end to it. Since this book was written a mass of fresh material has come to hand, but I can cull from it only here and there, presenting in random notes what seems most interesting and important. There are some verbal whimsies which may be inserted. Other words cited may not be new coinages, but are unusual. Nor can any one be sure that a new word, a new variant, a new use or meaning, supposedly evolved by a certain person, has not been employed by others. Such verbal coincidences may be as common as the coincidence of ideas; for the enduring words spring from the soul of the race. For instance, Captain Mahan's word "eventless" was used by George William Curtis in his *Prue and I*, published in 1856. And a Chicago critic, in the *Inter-Ocean*, has pointed out that the idea of Edgar Fawcett's "congenials" is found in Pope's use of "congenial" in his *Epistle to Mr. Jervas*.

Referring to the Japanese idea of duty, their superstition about it, etc., Osman Edwards calls this ancient training of theirs *dutiolatry*, in his book, *Japanese Plays and Playfellows*.

Dorothy Dix says: "Good manners are the *preservative* of peace and concord."

Exactarian, said of one who is exact, is proposed by a well-wisher of mine. Bacon said: "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, writing an exact man." The same friend suggests *finic*, made on the analogy of cynic, and meaning one who is finical.

J. C. Barthoff, associate editor of *The Pilgrim*, wonders why *trusticate*, meaning to form or organize into a trust, on the model of syndicate, has occurred to no one but himself.

Dr. Franz Hartmann says: "We speak of *existence*, and say that we exist; but it seems that our ancestors, who discovered this term, knew more about its true meaning than we do. They used to call things by their right names. The term 'exist,' from the Latin *ex*, out, and *est*, is, evidently means 'to be out.' Out of what? Evidently did the things which exist come out of the unmanifested state; they were contained as ideas in the universal mind and projected into outward existence. Thus the word 'existence' suggests a whole system of philosophy and gives us a key to the mystery of creation" (see p. 34).

"The *Chrysocracy* of the United States" was the headline of an article in the New York *Herald* of April 28, 1901, referring to the millionaires in our country. The word is obviously a variant of the name of Chrysostom, who "talked gold." It was made by Oliver Wendell Holmes, but plutocracy, meaning the same thing, has been more generally adopted.

John H. Girdner, M. D., is the author of a

book which he calls *Newyorkitis*, by no means a medical book, yet it treats of some of the peculiarities of the New Yorker.

Julien Gordon (Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger) wrote this sentence: "He had seen a photograph, slightly faded and more or less speckled, *ornating* for four years his companion's dressing-table." In *The Wage of Character* she says: "This incongruous *mélange* was a source of constant amusement to Vincent, who could *trone* among them to his complete satisfaction, striking terror to their simple hearts."

Clinton Scollard, in a poem, "The Dancing of Suleima," has this line:

The fountain *spurtled*, with mellow fret.

Edgar Saltus has used the word *encounterable*.

One reason perhaps, and a chief one, why fashionable people in this country have taken up the game of golf so zealously is because it provides them with a new lingo—many sporting technical terms which have a smart sound to them.

In *Pendennis*, chapter xxii., Thackeray speaks of "soldatesque manœuvres." It will be seen that the novelist here tacked on an Italian suffix to a German word. In the same book Thackeray used colloquially the term "perfectionate."

In a short story Louise Betts Edwards used the word *forlornity*.

Bric-à-brac was a neologism in France when Balzac wrote *Le Cousin Pons*.

Robert Herrick: "He smiled *delphically*."

Speaking of dendral (see p. 103), the United States Department of Agriculture has, in the Division of Forestry, what it calls dendrologists.

Nixon Waterman, the poet, fears he has not "brained" any new thing worthy of a place in this volume.

W. D. Howells makes one of his characters say, in effect, that there ought to be some other word that doesn't accuse a man's sanity in the degree "hallucinations" does—that is, when the man apparently shows no other signs of an unsound mind.

The greatest word-coiner in the Bible was Paul! He coined nearly 600 Greek words in his writings in the New Testament.

Rev. Edward Taylor, of Binghamton, N. Y., in an impromptu address (February, 1901) coined the word *possumist*—one capable of power, one to whom is possible the greatest strength. He spoke of the possumist as being of more account than either the optimist or the pessimist. The use of this word in an extempore speech was a fine instance of swift intellection.

Mr. Howells does not hesitate to use the word *spilth*, as "spilth of blood," marked obsolete in the dictionaries. Certain writers have tried to force *coolth*, as an antonym of warmth.

Eva Best: "As to the word 'theory,' allow me to say that it has its origin in an old Sanscrit word *dhyâ*, meaning to meditate, to think. The word theater is also derived from this word *dhyâ*,

and it really means, in this sense, to stand off and view—see—any spectacle or pageant or display going on before one's eyes. Now, he who has a 'theory,' who 'theorizes,' in imagination views that of which he thinks as a passing show; sees the whole subject before his mind's eye, and from the picture of all the parts thus presented he forms his 'theory,' or what seems to him the right idea of anything not as yet proved by being put in practice." But, Mrs. Best might have added, he may be wrong.

Rev. Alfred A. Wright, of Boston, uses his own word *distinctionary* in his discourses sometimes, meaning the distinctions in words and meanings.

Some one has pointed out how interesting it is to note the influence of the art of printing in preventing arbitrary changes in the formation of words. This is particularly true of those beginning with a vowel. Thus in olden times the French word *naperon*, a table-cloth, was adopted as an English word meaning a garment to protect the clothes of a person engaged in any kind of work. In the spoken language a *naperon* ultimately became an apron. Another example of common words which originally began with the letter "n" is orange. In its first English form it was *norange*, but a *norange* in time became orange. Again, the name of the poisonous snake, adder, formerly began with an "n" (*nadder*), as it does to-day in nearly every language other than English.

The word "gas," says Professor William Ramsay, "was not invented until Van Helmont devised it to designate various kinds of airs he observed.

In an admirable notice of a book by Edith Wharton, Ellen Burns Sherman observes: "The power to 'depolarize' words and phrases from their hackneyed associations is a gift that is none too common among authors whose plots are reasonably original. Certain adjectives become so wedded by usage to their nouns that few literary courts will grant them a divorce, however weary they may have become of each other. Consequently people go on writing about 'the mazy waltz,' 'a glowing tribute,' 'the happy couple' (made so by an 'officiating clergyman'), and a thousand other bethumbed phrases, till gradually a large part of the dictionary gets done up into little dried bouquets of faded phrases, coupled with nouns and adjectives, verbs and adverbs, with which the mantels of literature are adorned. So we should feel grateful to an author like Mrs. Wharton, who takes down from their figurative mantels some of these dried bouquets of literary grasses and substitutes for them fresh and fragrant blossoms culled from the pied meadows of fancy.

"In this gift of weaving new patterns upon the same old verbal looms that have been used for centuries, and in a certain chaste aloofness of style, Mrs. Wharton is related to Mrs. Meynell, though the former has a far wider and deeper scope than the English essayist. Mrs. Meynell's work is a kind of literary frost-work, and so

lacking in all suggestion of ruddy caloric properties that one fancies that only a colorless ichor would flow if her essays could be probed with a literary lancet. In the works of Mrs. Wharton, on the other hand, the reader is conscious of strong, healthy pulsations of feeling under her most restrained passages. In *The Moving Finger* there is, ethically, a tonic effect which affects the reader like a breeze wafted down from a grove of mountain pines. One is taken into an atmosphere vivified by moral oxygenation, and the sensation is a most delightful one after reading some of the works of other authors who lead their readers into malarial swamps and bogs."

I find this in an editorial in *Scribner's Magazine*: "There is one trait that belongs in common to every artistic effort of Americans, and that is the *cerebrality*, if the word may pass, of such effort."

Some recent examples of nouns turned into verbs are furnished by the English publication, *Notes and Queries*, as follows:

To gregory—to gibbet, to hang, from three successive hangmen of the name of Gregory. Hence the "Gregorian Tree," a name for the gallows.

To grimthorpe—to restore an ecclesiastical edifice badly—*e. g.*, the west front of St. Alban's Abbey and its window, when taken in hand by Lord Grimthorpe; a word first used in *The Athenæum* of July 23, 1892.

To lush—the slang word "lush," meaning beer

or other intoxicating liquor, is an abbreviation of Lushington, the name of a London brewer. Its adoption in this sense was perhaps facilitated by the fact of Shakespeare having used the old adjective "lush," meaning succulent, rich, luxuriant (*The Tempest*, ii., 1):

"How lush and lusty the grass looks ! How green !"

"They didn't look like regular Lushingtons at all."—Mayhew, *London Labour and London Poor*.

To sandwich—to place one object between two others of a different kind, character, etc. The Earl of Sandwich, a famous admiral who served under both Cromwell and Charles II., is said to have been the inventor of the sandwich composed of two pieces of bread and a thin slice of ham or other meat.

To simpson—to adulterate milk by adding water thereto, from a dairyman of this name who in the sixties was prosecuted on this account.

Some of the special terms used in Wall street and their meanings include:

Averaging—buying or selling stocks on a scale.

Bear—one who has sold stocks and who gains by a decline.

Big board—the New York Stock Exchange.

Blind pool—a close corporation; one which does not issue any statement of expenses or earnings.

Block—a number of shares bought or sold in a lump.

Boom—the opposite of a slump.

Bottom—the lowest point or price reached by a stock.

Break—a sudden decline caused by a stringency in the money market.

Bucketing—to execute orders in stocks without dealing on any regular exchange.

Bulge—the upward movement of a stock.

Bull—one who has bought stocks, expecting an advance.

Carrying—to hold a stock with the expectation of an advance.

Collateral—any security given in pawn when money is borrowed.

Covering—buying stock to satisfy a short sale on the day of delivery.

Crazy market—one which fluctuates violently without apparent reason.

Hunch—a tip based on one's instinct or impression.

Insider—one who causes a movement in the stock market.

Irish dividend—an assessment upon stockholders.

Lamb—a new speculator without knowledge of the market or its methods.

Leading—to buy stocks heavily.

Long—to have bought for a rise.

On 'Change—the floor of the Stock Exchange.

Piker—a small speculator.

Plunger—one who deals heavily in stocks, taking great risks.

Pool—the stock and money contributed by a clique to carry through a corner.

Scalping—buying or selling stocks on slight fluctuations.

Short—one who has sold stocks for a decline.

Slump—a sudden decline in the price of stocks.

Squeeze—a sudden movement of the market which forces the bulls or bears to close out their stocks at a loss.

Tip—private information in advance of the movement of a stock.

Top—the highest quotation of a stock.

Unloading—to sell out stocks which have been carried for some time.

Watering—to increase the quantity of a stock without improving its quality.

Writing in *Harper's Magazine*, Mr. Howells uses the word *apocryphers*. Also this: "The events of the Summer Islands are few, and none of the order of athletics between teams of the army and navy, and what may be called *societetics*, have happened in that past enchanted fortnight."

H. M. Alden: "We are so fixed in our fine *cosmicity*," etc.

In *Papa Bouchard* Molly Elliot Seawell says: "This cataclysm consisted of the simultaneous departure, or rather *levanting*, of the entire masculine element." In the same story she uses

debonairness and *larky*—"and if Victor led the larky life you so unjustly suspect him of," etc.

Eugene Wood, in a short story, has this: "'My child! my child!' *peacocked* Mrs. O'Connor from the head of the stairs, followed by the sedater father."

To give in detail recent word-coinage in matters of science and technics would be equivalent almost to writing a history of modern scientific and technical evolution, and so I have confined myself chiefly to words used in imaginative work. F. M. F. Cazin calls my attention to an expression which, though of scientific importance, indicates only an imaginary thing. "*Average section*" is the resulting section when a volume of irregular form and a stated length is transformed into a volume of regular form, and uniform section of the same stated length. The action of a ship in continuous displacement after initial immersion cannot be fully explained or mathematically expressed without the use of Mr. Cazin's term.

Holman F. Day has this in one of his verses:

"You could hear the *cronching-cranching* of his swashing spike-sole boots."

The editor of a Philadelphia journal says: "The *storiest* (meaning the story-teller or novelist) has his opportunity to shame formal history by the exactitude of his picture."

Dr. John H. Girdner and others use the phrase, "*practiser* of surgery," and why isn't this better than practitioner?

Duncan Smith, in a translation of fragment 22 from the Greek of Simonides of Ceos, has this line :

O Father Zeus, to *usward* change thy will.

Several exponents of the so-called New Thought, among them Henry Wood, use the mysterious collocation, *at-one-ment*.

Edgar Saltus, in a short story, says : " Barring two others, the rest of the party interested me but *mediocrally*."

Why not ordinarily say haps for happenings? The editor of Harper's *Magazine* and others have so used it.

Edith Wharton speaks of a " skyey task."

Marguerite Merington, in *A Gainsborough Lady*, makes an adjective of chance—*chancy*; also uses *daint* for dainty.

In an article Henry Holt mentions "*brutifying* spectacles."

In a recent editorial the *New York World* said : " Milady has made up her mind that she had as much right to *after-dary* liberty as Milord."

In a short story William Bulfin wrote : " The creamy, silky fleeces of the merinos rolled their greasy folds on the boarded floor of the vast shed as they fell under the *snick-snick*ing of a hundred pairs of shears."

Carlyle, in his essay on Boswell, used the word " giganity," which has been defined as a sarcastic synonym for pseudo-respectability.

The literary critic, Alfred Mathews, has alluded to the "paeanesque swagger" of a certain book.

William S. Walsh says: "When a novel is turned into a play, you say that the novel has been dramatized. There is no analogous word for the turning of a play into a novel. Yet the word is needed, because the thing, though unusual, is not unknown to literature. . . . The problem now presented . . . is to find a neat, expressive, and intelligible word that will be a fit corollary to 'dramatize,' and will describe the act of making a novel out of a drama. 'Fictionize' is hopeless." Many writers have used "novelize" in default of anything better.

Here is a little sensible philology from the pen of the President of the United States—Theodore Roosevelt: "In the books the bobcat is always called a lynx, which it is, of course; but whenever a hunter or trapper speaks of a lynx (which he usually calls 'link,' feeling dimly that the other pronunciation is a plural) he means a *lucivee*. Bobcat is a good distinctive name, and it is one which I think the book people might with advantage adopt; for wildcat, which is the name given to the small lynx in the East, is already preempted by the true wildcat of Europe. Like all people of European descent who have gone into strange lands, we Americans have christened our wild beasts with a fine disregard for their specific and generic relations. We called the bison 'buffalo' as long as it existed, and we

still call the big stag an 'elk,' instead of using for it the excellent term wapiti; on the other hand, to the true elk and the reindeer we gave the new names of moose and caribou—excellent names, too, by the way. The prong buck is always called antelope, though it is not an antelope at all; and the white goat is not a goat; while the distinctive name of 'big-horn' is rarely used for the mountain sheep. In most cases, however, it is mere pedantry to try to upset popular custom in such matters; and where, as with the bobcat, a perfectly good name is taken, it would be better for scientific men to adopt it. I may add that in this particular of nomenclature we are no worse sinners than other people. The English in Ceylon, the English and Dutch in South Africa, and the Spanish in South America have all shown the same genius for misnaming beasts and birds."

A well-known woman writer sometimes uses *blowth* for bloom, and I have noticed that she is not the only one who so employs it.

The late Senator Dr. Kyle, of South Dakota, described himself as an *Indocrat*, that is, he was Independent and a Democrat—a little of each. At one time—some ten years ago—the establishment of an Indocratic party was seriously proposed, but came to nothing.

The following is condensed from a newspaper article: When, not long ago, a certain young scion of French nobility began squandering his wife's property without rhyme or reason, the doctors

were asked to tell what was the matter with him. They refused to believe it was just old-fashioned depravity or profligacy; but they proved the case with sufficient pathologic care by taking the Greek word "*Coen*," meaning "common," and another Greek word, "*esthesia*," meaning taste (from which we get esthetic), and putting them together thus, *coenesthesia*, which they defined as a determination to communism. Thus science steps in to spare the feelings of a nobleman with a tendency to give away things, especially things belonging to somebody else.

Carolyn Wells is responsible for *wiseacreage*.

Says a New York literary journal: "One of the things one wishes one had said, and which one might so easily have said after some one else has said it, is found in the opening chapter of John Kendrick Bangs' clever story, *The Enchanted Type-writer*. In explaining his use of the word 'monkey' as a verb, Mr. Bangs admits that it may savor somewhat of what a friend of his calls the 'English slangage,' as distinguished from 'Andrew Language.' The difference could hardly have been more neatly expressed, yet it is obviously so easy to say."

John W. Foster, ex-Secretary of State, in showing the modern origin of the word diplomacy, points out that it is "derived from the word *diplo-ma*, the significance of which grew out of the practice of sovereigns of the mediæval period, following the Roman method of preservation of important documents, in having their royal war-

rants, decrees, and finally their treaties carefully inscribed on parchments or diplomas."

Some writer whom I cannot identify has given this origin to the word tantalize: A long time ago a wicked king named Tantalus lived in Phrygia, and in order to punish him the gods put him in a large tank almost full of water. Near him grew trees loaded with delicious fruits, and the boughs were almost within his reach. But every time he tried to pluck an orange or a pomegranate the limbs of the trees would wave beyond his grasp and he could not relieve his hunger. Whenever he bent his head to drink of the water that surrounded him it would shrink away from his lips, and he never could touch it. From the name Tantalus we get our word "tantalize." To show some good thing just ahead and yet keep the hopeful person from reaching it is the worst kind of teasing. It is really tantalizing.

A Philadelphia dramatic critic recently spoke of the *underdoneness* of a certain play.

Flora Bigelow Dodge has given us *hideosities*.

It is rightly contended that the term "wireless telegraphy" is not only too long and cumbersome, but a misnomer as well. Various persons have tried to think of a short, pronounceable name, of irreproachable linguistic antecedents, and such as to be acceptable to those speaking languages other than English. Among the names suggested thus far have been, *Marconigraphy*, *atmograpy*, *etherography*, *ethergraphy*, *conigraphy*,

syntography, etc. Doubtless some term much better than any of these will be found.

And now, kind reader, let us part with an amiable understanding, if possible. If I agree with you that really no great gain to the language seems to have resulted from any of our authors cited in this book, will you not admit that the study has been both interesting and profitable—in that you see words in a new and more potential light? For the shortcomings of the work I ask your indulgence; and to all who have rendered me assistance I feel most deeply indebted.

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